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THE
L I F E
OF
Mr. JAMES QUIN,
COMEDIAN.
WITH THE
HISTORY of the STAGE
FROM
His commencing ACTOR to his
Retreat to BATH.

ILLUSTRATED
With many curious and interesting Anecdotes
of several Persons of Distinction, Literature,
and Gallantry.

To which is added,
A genuine and authentic Copy of his Last WILL
and TESTAMENT.

DEDICATED TO DAVID GARRICK, Esq;

L O N D O N:
Printed for S. BLADON, in Pater-noster-Row.

MDCCLXVI.



TO

DAVID GARRICK, Esq;

WHOSE patronage, Sir, can these sheets more properly claim than yours? The LIFE of Mr. QUIN is so immediately connected with your own, and his pursuits for a long time were so very similar, that no one can form so just an estimate of the man, or judge so well of the merits of the actor, as he who is at once the real representative, and only just commentator of Shakespeare. Permit me, therefore, Sir, to lay this little work at your feet, which I flatter myself, if not from its intrinsic

DEDICATION.

worth, at least from the subject,
you will deign to accept of, and
place among those volumes which
illustrate dramatic history.

I am, SIR,

Among many thousands,

Your constant admirer,

AND MOST

Obedient humble servant,



THE EDITOR.



THE
L I F E
O F
Mr. JAMES QUIN,
C O M E D I A N.



C H A P. I.

His birth, family, expectancies, studies, early pursuits. The reason of changing them. His future plan of life interrupted by a very uncommon and almost fatal adventure—with its sequel.

THE public will, it is imagined, not be displeased to have some account of a person of whom so much has been said, and of whom so little has been hitherto known. His jokes may be called the standing
B jests

jesters of the town; but those who have hackneyed some of them, and murdered others, have scarce ever entered into the most curious part of his life or character; and yet, according to Mr. Addison, the best story in the world loses its greatest poignancy, when we are unacquainted with its hero. This, amongst other considerations, induced the editor of this performance to attempt an Essay towards the Life of Mr. James Quin, in hopes that some future biographer may, from these materials, and such others as he can obtain, transmit to posterity the memory of a man, who has diverted the present age in public and private—upon the dramatic stage, as well as that of life; who was one of the best actors and most facetious men of his time;—who was at once the gentleman and the scholar—the philosopher and the critic—the humourist and the moral man—the scourge of knaves and fools, and the admiration of the sensible and good. Such are the outlines of the picture before us; in every respect an original, and indeed inimitable, yet not without defects and blemishes in some of the features, and in various parts of the drapery. Perfection is not the lot of humanity, and an honest historian scorns to flatter.

In

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In the pursuit of this task the editor has encountered many difficulties, as there are scarce any lights to be met with in such books as might be supposed to give some anecdotes of so extraordinary a character. The Histories of the Stage, the Annals of the Theatre, scarce mention him either as an actor or a man: so that what is here offered to the reader, is principally gathered from conversation and acquaintance.

It might look somewhat too pompous to say, that, like Homer, more than one city claimed his birth; yet this really is true: for though it has been generally believed, that he drew his first breath in Dublin, other parts of Ireland have been mentioned as the place of his nativity. He was, however, born in the parish of St. Paul's, Covent-Garden, London, in the year 1693. Various also are the reports of his family. Some have averred, that his father was an American, and that James was the illegitimate issue of a criminal correspondence, which his father kept up in Ireland upon his return from the western hemisphere, and that on this account he was deprived of his patrimonial expectations. This imaginary lineage was never allowed by Quin himself: on the contrary, he always asserted that his

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father

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father was an English gentleman, who, some years after his son's birth, settled in Ireland, and was possessed of a small fortune, which his natural generosity and beneficence greatly incumbered. James's education was such as suited the station which seemed to be allotted for him, that of a gentleman: after having gone through the necessary prelude of grammar-school learning, he was sent to the university of Dublin, where he remained till he was near twenty years of age.

His father destined him for the bar; and at this period he came over to England to pursue his studies in jurisprudence. To this end he took chambers in the Temple, and for some time studied Coke upon Littleton with the usual success of young Templars, who consider their situation, so particularly adapted for pleasure, as no way compatible with so dry and tedious an application. A life of gaiety and dissipation took place, and he found a much stronger disposition to read Shakespeare than the Statutes at large.

About this time his father died, when he found his patrimony so very small, that there was no possibility of his supporting himself upon it; and this naturally induced him to begin seriously to think of availing himself of those talents which
nature

nature had bestowed upon him, and repair by his own merit, the effects of his father's generosity and too liberal hospitality. His good sense soon pointed out to him, that as he had made but a very small progress in the study of the law, so he could not expect to reap the fruits of his present pursuit but at a very distant period: a young counsellor of the greatest merit has many obstacles to surmount, before he obtains any considerable practice; chance and interest are great auxiliaries to his success, as many a veteran barrister has much reason to complain. Besides, his finances were so circumscribed, that there was scarce a practicability of his accomplishing himself in this profession without some temporary support.

These reasons soon induced him to quit his present pursuit, and there appeared to him no where so fair a prospect as the stage. He had many requisites to form a good actor: an expressive countenance; a marking eye; a clear voice, full and melodious; an extensive memory, founded upon a long application to our best classic authors: an enthusiastic admiration of Shakespeare; a happy and articulate pronunciation; and a majestic figure. He had for some time associated with most of the capital actors of this

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period; he was frequently in company with Booth and Wilks, and formed a very strict intimacy with Ryan. It was to the last of these that he opened his mind with respect to coming upon the stage. Ryan was charmed to find his friend so sincerely approve of his plan of life, as to be desirous of adopting it; and he introduced him to the managers of the Theatre-Royal in Drury-lane, who engaged him in August 1717, to appear the succeeding winter.

How uncertain are the events of this transitory world! Quin, who was now assiduously employed in studying several parts, which he imagined he might appear in the ensuing season, was, by a most unexpected incident, obliged to leave this metropolis, and to take refuge in Ireland. Whoever was acquainted with our hero in his younger days, must be sensible that he was of a very amorous disposition, and that James laid claim to no extravagant share of chastity. — He would frankly own, that *he was no proud man; any fine woman, that was not a professed whore, would serve his turn; and that he religiously adopted the old and vulgar proverb, A slice off a cut loaf was not so soon missed, as from a whole one.* James had, upon this principle, carried on

what he thought a very snug intrigue with Mrs. L——, a woollen-draper's lady in the Strand. We shall pass over the various scenes of this growing correspondence, as they were usually represented at his own chambers; but the blind goddess was at length resolved to make him severely pay for all his good fortune. He had lent the key of his chambers to a friend of his, who had a demi-rep in tow, whom he could not bring into harbour, either at a tavern or a bagnio, and was therefore to man her that evening in Quin's dock, where many pretty sailing vessels had been fitted out for public stations. Quin accidentally met with Mrs. L——, who had been to the play-house, and could not get in: the opportunity was so favourable it was not to be slighted; he had already insisted upon her company, when it was too late to tell her he had just recollected he was not possessed of the key of his chambers: such an excuse would now have looked like coolness on his part. In a word, he prevailed on her with much intreaty, to go to a bagnio, which was, perhaps, the first time in her life she had been in such a place. Her terrors were extravagantly great till she had got fairly housed; she then thought there was no further

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farther danger to be apprehended, and gave a full loose to the indulgence of her amorous passion. The hour of retreat now approached, and she was rising from bed, whither she had repaired completely undressed, when an ignorant waiter opened the door to introduce another company, not knowing the room was already occupied.—But consternation—shame—horror—anguish—fury—rage—madness—all assist to delineate the scene—No other than her husband was leading in a *Vestal* to make an offering at the same altar. Quin was still in bed; but perceiving Mr. L—— ready to wreak all his vengeance upon his wife; he flew to his sword, and drew it in her defence. In the conflict, Mr. L—— was wounded in the thigh: and this affair terminated for the present, with a couple of prosecutions against Quin; the first for *crim. con.* and the next for an assault and battery.

London was now too warm a climate for our hero to respire in with safety. He flew to Dublin, where he engaged upon that theatre, and acquitted himself tolerably well in two or three parts. He learned soon after the death of Mr. L——; and his friend Ryan now prevailed upon him to return to this metropolis, and fulfil his theatrical engagements here.

CHAP.

C H A P. II.

A concise view of the progress of the stage, towards its present state; illustrated with many curious anecdotes.

IN order to form a more perfect judgment of Quin's character as an actor, it will be necessary to consider the state of the stage at that period, and take a short retrospect of its various advances to the perfection which it has now obtained.

It is somewhat extraordinary, and deserving of observation, though I have not met with any writer that has made the remark, that the regal restoration of Charles II. and the restoration of the stage, were events of the same period. This prince granted two patents for the forming of two distinct companies of comedians: that which was under the direction of Mr. Killegrew, had the title of the King's Servants; and the other, under the management of Sir William Davenant, was stiled the Duke's Company. Both these companies performed at the same time, and met with great success, having the sanction and protection of the nobility, who now considered theatrical

theatrical representations in their true light, as the most moral and rational amusement that can engage the vacant hours of study or business. Propriety of action, and elegance of expression, had never till now been duly attended to upon the English stage, and the present representations were moreover attended with two very critical advantages: the first was, the theatres immediately opening after so long a suspension of acting, during the civil war, and the anarchy that succeeded it: the second advantage was, that no women had ever before represented any part. The female characters had heretofore been performed by the most effeminate actors in the company*. The heightening that actresses must have at first given to theatrical representations,

* The managers could not however immediately supply all the female characters with actresses, as we find by an anecdote that is handed down to us by different theatrical historians, of king Charles coming a little before his usual time to a tragedy, and finding the actors not ready to begin; the king was impatient, and sent to know the meaning of it; when the master of the company coming up to the box, judging that the best excuse for the delay would be the true one, plainly told the king, That the *Queen was not shaved yet*. At which the king laughed heartily, till the queen could make her appearance fresh trimmed.

when

MR. JAMES QUIN. II

when compared to the heterogeneous appearance that the most smooth-faced comedian could have made in petticoats, is almost inconceivable. At the time that Shakespeare wrote, he was not unapprized to what a disadvantage his female characters must appear under this circumstance; and to this consideration we may reasonably attribute the scarcity with which they are strewed in most of his pieces.

The King's Servants acted then, as they do now, at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-lane; and the Duke's Company at the Duke's-Theatre in Dorset-Gardens. They both continued to meet with success for several years; but their managers were not yet arrived at sufficient skill in their departments; they were still ignorant how to afford the town an agreeable and constant variety: they had hitherto got up but very few stock plays, and these by their frequent exhibition, at length fatiated their audiences. Killgrew, however, who was the most skilful manager of the two, still found some resource in the superiority of his actors, and the variety of their abilities; and on the other hand, Davenant, in order to balance their success, first added scenery and music to action, and introduced a theatrical

theatrical medley, since known by the name of Dramatic Operas. The court soon after interfered in the opposite manager's disputes, and a negotiation was set on foot, which terminated in the union of their patents in the year 1684. Nevertheless, by various incidental causes, the stage languished, and was just expiring, when it was again revived, by king William's licence in 1695, at which period, the great Betterton made his appearance, and gave the world the greatest idea they ever had of just acting upon the English stage; for we are told, and we must take the tradition of our forefathers upon these heads, that Betterton was an actor, as Shakespeare was an author, both without competitors, formed for the mutual assistance and illustration of each other's genius: that when he spoke, you might see the muse of Shakespeare in her triumph, with all her beauties in her best array, rising into real life, and charming her beholders*.

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* “ The most that a Vandyke can arrive at, is
 “ to make his portraits of great persons seem to
 “ think; a Shakespeare goes farther yet, and tells
 “ you what this picture thought; a Betterton steps
 “ beyond them both, and calls them from the
 “ grave, to breathe, and be themselves again in
 “ feature, speech, and motion. When the skilful
 “ actor

It would be impertinent in a modern to pretend to say Betterton did not possess all those graces and qualities which formed the complete actor; but with due deference to our predecessors, there seems such a partiality in men of the last age, for every thing that was then prevalent, that I cannot help suspecting either their judgment or their veracity, upon many occasions, and in nothing more than with regard to actors. Cibber in his Apology says, "Had Sandford lived in Shakespeare's time, I am confident his judgment must have chose him above all other actors, to have played his Richard the Third;" and I shall only add, if Cibber, when he wrote his Apology, had seen Garrick in that part, he certainly would have altered his opinion.

This, perhaps, may be considered only as mere *ipse dixit*, pro and con; and it may be urged, that my partiality in favour of Garrick, is as strong as Cibber's might be for Betterton; but the point is

"actor shews you all these powers at once united,
 "and gratifies at once your eye, your ear, and
 "your understanding. To conceive the pleasures
 "arising from such harmony, you must have been
 "present at it—'tis not to be told you." Vide the
 Apology for the Life of C. Cibber, p. 83.

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surely

surely different, when I oppose Garrick to Sandford, who, even at that time of day, was considered but as a third rate actor, the *Spagnoles* of the theatre, the *stage-villain*, and could not be put in competition with many of our present subalterns.

But to resume: Soon after the death of queen Mary, consort to William the Third, the Theatre in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, which was formed out of a tennis-court, was by patent opened; when Mr. Congreve's comedy of *Love for Love* had such an extraordinary run, that scarce any other play was performed till the end of the season. Mr. Congreve was then in such high esteem as an author, that besides his profits from this play, the managers offered him a whole share with them, which he accepted; in consideration of which he obliged himself to give them one new play every year. Dryden, in king Charles's time, had the same share with the King's Company, but he bound himself to give them two plays every season. This, it may be imagined, he could not long support; and it is reasonable to think, he would have served them better with one in a year not so hastily written. Mr. Congreve's bad state of health prevented his producing any more

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than one piece in the next three years, when the Mourning Bride made its appearance. The very first speech secured him success, and indeed if there had not been another good line in it, what judicious critic could have condemned the production that contained these lines, especially when they were uttered by Mrs. Bracegirdle, in the character of Almeria?

Music has charms to sooth a savage breast,
To soften rocks, or bend a knotted oak.
I've read that things inanimate have mov'd,
And, as with living souls, have been inform'd,
By magic numbers and persuasive sound.
What then am I? Am I more senseless grown
Than trees or flint? O force of constant woe!
'Tis not in harmony to calm my griefs.

The next piece Mr. Congreve produced, and which was performed at the same theatre, was the comedy of The Way of the World, which certainly contains more sterling wit than any comedy that has been produced since. It is true, those critics who envy Congreve for his genius, aver, that it is his principal defect to have too much wit, for that his very fools say good things, and all his dialogue is repartee: it is a thousand pities they could not imitate his faults; they would greatly tend to perfect their

productions. Congreve's wit, methinks, might escape uncensured, without it were satiriz'd with at least as much pleasantry as the thing complained of; if indeed the critics had confined themselves to some of his luscious scenes, they would have had a much fairer chance of success; but even his faults upon this score admit of some apology—the vitiated taste of the town, grounded upon the example of preceding writers. These immoralities of the stage had by avowed indulgence, been creeping into it ever since the time of king Charles; nothing that was loose could be then too low for it: the London Cuckolds, the most rank play that ever succeeded, was then in the highest court favour; nor was it discountenanced till, to the honour of Mr. Garrick, he had the courage to abolish its representation on the anniversary of Lord-mayor's day; when the managers of the other house, whose eyes were at length opened to the propriety of the measure, followed his example.

Whilst our authors were so licentious, the ladies were observed to be decently afraid of venturing bare-faced to a new comedy, till they were assured that they might do it without the risk of insult to their modesty; or, if their curiosity were

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too strong for their patience, they took care at least to save appearances, and seldom came upon the first days of acting, but in mask, (then daily worn, and admitted in the pit, side-boxes and gallery) which custom, however, had so many ill consequences, that it has been abolished these many years. In this almost general corruption, Dryden, whose plays were famed more for their wit than their chastity, led the way, which he fairly confesses, and endeavours to excuse in his prologue to the Pilgrim, revived for his benefit, in his declining age and fortune, the beginning of this century. I shall select a few lines from this prologue to support my assertion :

Perhaps the parson stretch'd a point too far,
When with our theatres he wag'd a war.
He tells you that this very moral age
Receiv'd the first infection from the stage.
But sure a banish'd court with lewdness fraught,
The seeds of open vice returning brought.
Thus lodg'd (as vice by great example thrives)
It first debauch'd their daughters and their wives.
London, a fruitful soil, yet never bore
So plentiful a crop of horns before.
The poets, who must live by courts or starve,
Were proud so good a government to serve;
And mix'd with buffoons and with pimps profane,
Tainted the stage, for some small scrap of gain.
For they like harlots, under bawds profess,
'Took all the ungodly pains, and got the least.

Thus did the thriving malady prevail,
The court its head, the poets but the tail.
The sin was of our native growth, 'tis true,
The scandal of the sin was wholly new.
Misses there were, but modestly conceal'd;
Whitehall the naked Venus first reveal'd;
Where standing, as at Cyprus, in her shrine,
The strumpet was ador'd with rites divine.

Such then was the state of the stage in the beginning of this century; let us now see what farther advances it made towards decency and perfection in the course of seventeen years. As it was as yet under no particular restriction, many indecent, and even libellous pieces were ushered forth, to the scandal of good manners, and the insult of all civil liberty; but on the other hand, to make some amends for this, Cato, after being nine years sequestered in Mr. Addison's closet, made its appearance upon the public stage, at the time that Booth was in his greatest perfection. The success this piece met with, as well in London as at Oxford, is beyond all comprehension, and could be surpassed by nothing but so uncommon a coalition of sentiments in the Whigs and Tories, (at a time that party ran very high) who seemed emulous to surpass each other, not only in the applause they bestowed upon it, but even in the presents

presents they made to the capital performers in it.

The Careless Husband, written by Colley Cibber, was represented at Drury-lane sometime before. This comedy, for the purity of the sentiment, and the justness of the characters, may be ranked foremost in the laureat's productions. He notwithstanding tells us, that Mrs. Oldfield had a great share in its success, not only from the uncommon excellence of her action, but even from her personal manner of conversing; for, he says, there are many sentiments in the character of lady Betty Modish, that were almost originally her own, or only dressed with a little more care than when they negligently fell from her lively humour.

The principal actors at this period were, Mr. Booth, a gentleman of a liberal education, an agreeable person, and melodious voice; equally happy in his gesticulations as his elocution, and was reckoned the greatest tragedian that ever appeared on any stage—at least to those who had not seen his predecessor Betterton.—Mr. Wilks, who was a very handsome man; of a graceful mien; studious of proper attitudes and cadences, in which he excelled most of his competitors. His fort lay in comedy, though
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he was no contemptible tragedian. Mr. Dogget, the greatest original in low comedy that has ever yet appeared. Mr. Colley Cibber, the best fop that, perhaps, ever performed upon any stage. Mr. Estcourt, a great mimic, though but a middling actor. Mr. Johnson, a performer of sound judgment, who succeeded in many walks in comedy. To whom may be added as excellent actresses, Mrs. Oldfield and Mrs. Porter; the first in comedy, and the last in tragedy.



C H A P. III.

Quin's first appearance upon the London stage. The gradual advances he made towards speaking. The manager's opinion of his performance of Falstaff.—His uncommon success in that character. Anecdotes concerning Ryan. An uncommon duel, upon an uncommon occasion.

MR. Quin first made his appearance at Drury-lane, in the year 1718. At that time of day, seniority of date was considered with as much jealousy in the green-room, as in the army or navy; and an actor that should at once

once have rushed upon the town, with all the powers of a Betterton or a Booth, in a capital character, would have been looked upon by his competitors for fame as little better than an usurper of talents and applause. Besides, the manager considered acting as a mere mechanical acquisition, that nothing but time could procure; and therefore, every one in his company was to serve his apprenticeship before he attempted being even a journeyman actor. This accounts for Quin's remaining for a long time the mere scene drudge, the faggot of the drama. He, at length, however, performed some capital parts, and his name made its appearance in the bills, (though not in CAPITALS) annexed to Banquo in Macbeth, and the Lieutenant of the Tower in Richard the Third.

It was not till the year 1720, that he had an opportunity of displaying his great theatrical powers. Upon the revival of the Merry Wives of Windsor at Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, of which the late Mr. Rich was then manager, there was no one in the whole company who would undertake the part of Falstaff; Rich was therefore inclined to give up all thoughts of representing it, when Quin happening to come in his way, said, If he pleased,
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he would attempt it.—“Hem!” said Rich, taking a pinch of snuff—“You attempt Falstaff!—why (hem!) you might as well think of acting Cato after Booth.—The character of Falstaff, young man, is quite another character from what you think;” (taking another pinch of snuff) “it is not a little snivelling part, that—that—in short, that any one can do.—There is not a man among you that has any idea of the part but myself.—It is quite out of your walk.—No, never think of Falstaff—never think of Falstaff—it is quite—quite out of your walk, indeed, young man.”

This was the reception his first effort of stepping out of the Faggot-Walk met with, and for some days he laid aside all thoughts of ever doing Falstaff, or indeed speaking upon the stage, except it were to deliver a message. Ryan, who at that time had the ear and confidence of Rich, having heard Quin, long before he thought of coming upon the stage, repeat some passages in the character of Falstaff, prevailed upon the manager to let Quin rehearse them before him; which he accordingly did, but not much to his master’s satisfaction. However, as the case was desperate, and either the

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the Merry Wives of Windsor must have been laid aside, or Quin perform Falstaff; this alternative, at length, prevailed upon Rich to admit James into this part.

The first night of his appearance in this character, he surprized and astonished the audience: no actor before ever entered into the spirit of the author, and it seemed as if Shakespeare had by intuition drawn the knight * so long before for Quin only to represent. The just applause he met with upon this occasion is incredible: continued clappings, and peals of laughter, in some measure interrupted the representation; though it was impossible that any regularity whatever could have more increased the mirth, or excited the approbation of the audience. It would, however, be injustice to the other performers, not to acknowledge that they greatly contributed to

* Henry the Fourth was at the same time performed at Drury-lane Theatre; where Booth did Hotspur; Wilks, the Prince of Wales; Ciber, Glendour; and Harper, Sir John Falstaff. Notwithstanding three of the parts were so well cast, and Harper was no bad comedian, and a good figure of the knight, this play did not meet with any applause, in comparison to what it did in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, which was entirely owing to Quin's doing Falstaff.

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the success of the piece, which had a very great run, and was of eminent service to the company. Ryan was excellent in the part of Ford: Spillar, reckoned among the greatest comedians of that time, performed one of his strongest parts, that of Doctor Caius; and Boheme, another very good actor, did Justice Shallow.

Ryan, at that period, was amongst the first-rate actors; and this will not appear extraordinary, if we consider it was before the accident he met with, which occasioned his voice to falter, as we may remember in our own time, that he was very genteel in his person, was elegant in his action, and always correct in his part. The accident here mentioned was this: Going home one night alone from the play-house, he was attacked by two street robbers near Lincoln's-Inn-Fields; when Ryan drew his sword in his defence, and one of the villains fired a pistol at him, which lodged a ball in his throat. It was extracted by a very eminent surgeon, while it was a matter of debate with the faculty, whether the wound was mortal. It proved otherwise; but it greatly affected his voice to the end of his life. This accident, however, never diminished his salary, and to the last hour, he
continued

continued receiving as much as he had done in the greatest zenith of his acting: so permanent and inviolable a friendship did there exist between Mr. Rich and Ryan; and the latter never once deserted him, in all the various revolutions of the stage.

These remarks are, perhaps, somewhat antedated; but as I may not have another fair opportunity of mentioning Ryan again as an actor, I hope to be excused inserting them here, rather than drag them in head and shoulders in another place.

Soon after Quin came upon the stage, a duel was fought in Hyde-park for an actress;—the only duel upon record, that ever was fought for an actress: but this is not astonishing, when it is known that it was for no less a personage than the (afterwards) celebrated Polly Peachum—she who could captivate the great and intrepid soul of captain Macheath, and ravish the pride and honour of the d—— of B——, who entitled her to figure to the end of her days as a d——. She was in the upper boxes at the representation of a new performance, when a gentleman of the army who sat next to her, said some civil things to her, which her *theatrical virtue* construed into an insult,

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and the son of Mars had the mortification to find that all his *soft things* were thrown away upon her. The next time she appeared upon the stage, the captain happened to come somewhat furcharged with claret, and recollecting the lady's insolence a few evenings before, he began to give her a serenade of cat-calls, which interrupted the play. A *man of fashion*, who sat next to the captain, and had the lady's glory at heart, told him, "He behaved very ill, and ought to be turned out." This was sufficient; they retired to an adjacent tavern in order to settle their difference in an amicable way, and cut one another's throats;—whilst the tragedy went peaceably on, without any uproar or bloodshed. But the *man of fashion* having more prudence than to contend with any one in his profession, he declined fighting with swords; but agreed meeting the next morning in Hyde-park, to decide the affair with pistols. They met accordingly; and the *man of fashion* was, *à-la-mode de l'honneur*, mortally wounded—in the skirt of his coat.

C H A P. IV.

Curious and entertaining anecdotes of the theatre. The origin of their being guarded by the military power. A few strictures thereupon, and its effect illustrated. Quin's extraordinary fortitude and presence of mind in a capital character: an unlucky adventure, which costs him his liberty, and endangers his life.

THE theatres till now had never been guarded by any but civil officers, when a riot that happened in the year 1721, at the theatre in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, gave occasion to the military power being added to the civil, for the protection of the audience as well as the players from insult. As this is a memorable epocha in dramatic history, the reader will, doubtless, not be displeased to meet with the anecdote that gave rise to this extraordinary measure.

A certain noble earl, who was said (and with some degree of certainty, as he drank usquebaugh constantly at his waking) to have been in a state of intoxication for six years, was behind the scenes at the close of a comedy, and seeing one of his companions on the other side, among the performers, crossed

the stage, and was accordingly hissed by the audience. Mr. Rich was on the side the noble earl came over to, and on hearing the uproar in the house at such an irregularity, the manager said, "I hope your lordship will not take it ill, if I give orders to the stage door-keeper not to admit you any more:" on his saying that, his lordship saluted Mr. Rich with a slap on the face, which he immediately returned, and his lordship's face being round and fat, made his cheek ring with the force of it. Upon this spirited return, my lord's drunken companions collected themselves directly, and Mr. Rich was to be put to death; but Quin, Ryan, Walker, &c. &c. stood forth in the defence of the manager, and a grand scuffle ensued, by which the gentlemen were all drove out at the stage door into the street. They then sallied into the boxes with their swords drawn, and broke the sconces, cut the hangings, (which were gilt leather finely painted) and continued the riot, till Mr. Quin came round with a constable and watchmen, and charged them every one into custody. They were carried before justice Hungerford, who then lived in the neighbourhood, and all bound over to answer the consequences; but they were soon

soon persuaded by their wiser friends to make up this matter; and the manager got ample redress. The king being informed of the whole affair, was highly offended, and ordered a guard to attend that theatre as well as the other; which is continued to this day*.

No doubt it was the opinion of the managers, and some other people at that time, that the appearance of the military power at the theatres would suppress all future disturbances there, and that none would be so fool-hardy as to oppose cat-calls and pippins to fuses and bayonets; but it was not considered how far the soldiers had a power to act upon these occasions, or that if they had once attempted to avail themselves of the superiority of their arms, whether this would not immediately have been construed into dragooning the town into the approbation of a new piece, or a new actor? or whether a single bayonet being used, or a single musket being fired, would not have been more fatal to the managers, than the tearing up of all the benches in the pit and gallery? Critics alone would not have stood forth champions in the cause of dramatic liberty, the political

* See Victor's History of the Theatres.

anti-ministerial writers of the times, and many there were at that period, would doubtless have taken the cue, and represented this among the various evils arising from standing armies. The administration at that time were certainly of this opinion; and therefore, though they granted the managers the apparent assistance of military aid, as many paper soldiers, or their own scene-shifting-guards, would have been of equal service to them, in any time of real emergency.

Experience has since repeatedly evinced the truth of these observations. Scarce had the managers fortified their theatrical garrisons, before they were obliged to surrender at discretion to an unarmed foe. A new pantomime was brought on at Drury-lane theatre, which was to end with a grand dance; madam Chateauf, the head dancer at that time, was to have been the principal performer; but she being taken ill, the dance was necessarily set aside; though the managers published her name three successive nights, without making any apology for the omission. The first night the audience remained pretty quiet; the second they only hissed; but on the third night, they ushered out the ladies, and then began

gan to demolish the house. The first motion that was made, and by a noble marquis, was to fire it; but that being carried in the negative, they began with the orchestra, broke the harpsichord and base-viol, together with the looking-glasses, sconces, and chandeliers; pulled up the benches in the pit, broke down the boxes, and even the royal arms. It is true, the noble lord who was the ring-leader, relenting the next day, in his cooler moments, of this outrage, sent a bank note of a hundred pounds to the manager; but this was a very small reparation of the damage sustained. Upon this occasion the guards remained neuter.

Another tumult happened at the same theatre a very short time after, on account of the managers continuing raised prices to old entertainments; but this conflict ended without any *bloodshed*, or even *scene slaughter*. After two or three nights disturbance, a country gentleman was taken out of the upper-boxes (the civil power only acting) and carried before justice Deveil; but, as usual, his worship declined going through with his theatrical part. This unwarrantable step (though, perhaps, the constables might have acted by virtue of warrants) irritated

tated the audience so much, that they insisted upon Mr. Fleetwood's coming upon the stage; but as he was not an actor, he pleaded the privilege of being exempted from appearing on the public stage; but sent them word, that he was ready to confer with any number that should be deputed to meet him in the green-room. The representatives of the audience were accordingly chosen, and so completely executed their commission, as to obtain of the manager all they requested.

But the most general opposition to theatrical measures was upon another occasion at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket; and as this affair merits more serious attention than either of the former, the reader will, doubtless, not be displeased to meet with a few previous reflections, which it is hoped will not appear impertinent.

The French tongue had, by the artifice of Lewis the Fourteenth's administration, been industriously promulgated throughout Europe; it was spoken at all the courts, and bid fair to be the universal language;—a necessary step, according to the opinion of that all-grasping prince, towards universal empire. To this end comedians were trained up
in.

in France, and at convenient times dispersed throughout the capital cities of Europe; and this was thought a favourable juncture for them to make their appearance at London. The proprietors of the Little Theatre in the Hay-market were so infatuated, as to imagine French comedies would amuse and instruct the town, and absolutely introduced them upon that stage. But the public took the alarm, and even resolved to suppress the insult, as every true Englishman then considered it. The curtain drew up with the actors surrounded by guards, well knowing they stood in need of much protection; but this step no way intimidated the audience, who being resolved not to let them go on, began regularly with cat-calls, then a volley of pippins, and thirdly, a general discharge of rotten eggs. The proprietors were now terrified, more especially when they found the soldiers remain motionless, and quaking behind the scenes at the consequences; at length, as their last resource, they sent for justice Deveil to read the Riot Act. But Sir Thomas, so far from being allowed to proceed in this business, found himself under the absolute necessity of ordering, with his own voice, both troops and actors off the stage. The warriors and
come-

comedians being now retired, the audience thought it was time to testify their resentment to the proprietors, for their imprudent and insolent attempt, and accordingly demolished without reserve all the benches, scenes, and decorations. Nor did the ambassadors of France and Spain, who were present upon this occasion, escape with impunity, but had a share of abuse to divide between them proportioned to their rank, and which they were compelled to hear, as they could not get away; the cutting of the braces of their carriages having been judged a very proper preliminary step, to make sure of the honour of their company, during this whole comi-tragi-farcical conflict.

The spirit which was shewn against the French comedians, engendered many tumults, which the undiscerning multitude imagined equally popular and national as the opposition to Gallic performers and performances. This contagion spread from the Hay-market to Drury-lane, and furnished Quin with many opportunities of testifying his natural prowess, as well as his jocular-persuasive abilities, which frequently succeeded. He has more than once appeared an audience by telling them a story, when

when they were elevated to the highest pitch of rage at the play not beginning in time. His famous story of *the round and square trenchers* is well known, and it is equally well testified, that he absolutely told this story to a crowded house one night, when the play could not begin till the arrival of some of the royal family, who did not come till past seven.

The following anecdote is also related of him, but with what degree of truth the editor of these sheets will not pretend to determine. There was one evening a riot at the stage-door, when Mr. Quin wounded a young fellow, who had drawn upon him, slightly in the hand. The spark presently after came into one of the green boxes over the stage-door. The play was *Macbeth*, and in the fine soliloquy where he sees the imaginary dagger, as Quin repeated,

“ And on thy blade are drops of reeking blood,”

the young fellow bawled out, “ Ay—

“ reeking indeed!—what does your con-

“ science prick you?—You rascal, that’s

“ my b’ood you drew just now.” Quin

giving him a severe side-look, replied

just loud enough to be heard by him.

“ Damn your blood, I say;”—and then,

without

without the least hesitation, went on with the speech ; so that the major part of the audience scarce noticed the interruption.

The only comment that shall be made upon this story, is, that if it be true, it was a proof of a most extraordinary presence of mind, vast coolness of temper, and uncommon fortitude ; no small qualifications to perfect an actor ; for not to be visibly flustered at any little interruption which he may meet with whilst upon the stage, or in the course of his speech, is one of those negative qualifications that may be put in competition with the more brilliant excellencies of capital performers. How few actors there are, who, in similar circumstances, would not have deprived the audience of a material share of their entertainment, in one of the most principal scenes, the reader is left to determine from his own knowledge and experience.

I am sorry to find myself brought to that period of Mr. Quin's life, which is equally disagreeable to recollect as it is to recite.

Every one who knew Mr. Quin whilst upon the stage, must have been sensible, that notwithstanding the rough fantastic manner which so much characterized him, no one was of a more humane disposition, or less addicted to revenge:
this

this may be gathered from his behaviour upon various occasions, and particularly to the self-sufficient Theophilus Cibber. There was at this time upon Drury-lane theatre a subaltern player, or rather fag-got, whose name never made its appearance in the bills, and therefore will scarce be found in the annals of the theatres of that period: Williams, however, was the name he bore; he was a native of Wales, and was not the least nettlesome of his countrymen. He performed the part of the messenger in the tragedy of Cato, and in saying, "Cæsar sends health to Cato," he pronounced the last word, *Keeto*; which so struck Quin, that he replied with his usual coolness, "Would *he had sent* a better messenger." This reply so stung Mr. Williams, that he from that moment vowed revenge: he followed Quin into the Green-room, when he came off the stage, and after representing the injury he had done him, by making him appear ridiculous in the eyes of the audience, and thereby hurting him in his profession, he then called him to an account as a gentleman, and insisted upon satisfaction. But Quin, with his usual philosophy and humour, endeavoured to rally his passion. This did but add fuel to his antagonist's rage,

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who

who, without farther remonstrance, retired, and waited for Quin under the Piazza, upon his return from the tavern to his lodging. Williams drew upon him, and a rencounter ensued, in which Williams fell.

Quin was tried for this affair at the Old Bailey, and it was brought in manslaughter, to the entire satisfaction of the court, and all who were acquainted with the origin and progress of this quarrel.



C H A P. V.

The state of the theatres at the time of the Beggars-Opera coming out ;—its success.—The fate of Cibber's attempt in the same way, and of the second part of Mr. Gay's Opera. The origin of the licensing act ; to whom we are indebted for it. Mr. Quin's farther progress as an actor ; engages at Drury-lane ; the revolutions of that theatre ; the uncommon applause he meets with in the character of Cato.

NOtwithstanding Quin's great merit, added to the abilities of Ryan, Boheme, Spillar, Griffin, Eggleton, and the two Bullocks, who were at that time
con-

considered as actors of the first class in their different walks; Booth and Wilks had so far the ascendancy over the taste and judgment of the town, that they carried all before them; and from the time of the run of the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Rich could never fill his house without orders, till he introduced Pantomimes, and acted Harlequin himself; or rather till he, with much reluctance, was prevailed upon to perform Gay's *Beggar's Opera*, which came out in 1727, and had such amazing success. *Cato*, it is true, met with great applause, but this opera had a run of forty nights longer than that much admired tragedy.

This uncommon reception of the *Beggar's Opera* induced Colley Cibber to attempt something of the same kind next year, under the title of *Love in a Riddle*; but how different was its reception from Gay's production!—it was damned to the lowest regions of infamy the very first night; which so mortified Cibber, that it threw him into a fever; and from this moment he resolved, as soon as he conveniently could, to leave the stage, and no longer submit himself or his talents to the capricious taste of the town.

It was then generally thought, that his jealousy of Gay, and the high opinion

he entertained of his new piece, had operated so strongly, as to make him set every engine in motion to get the sequel of the Beggar's Opera, called Polly, suppressed, in order to engross the town entirely to Love in a Riddle. Whether Cibber did or did not bestir himself in this affair, it is certain that Gay and Rich had the mortification to see all their hopes of a succeeding plenteous harvest blasted, by the lord-chamberlain's absolute prohibition of it; after it had been rehearsed, and was just ready to bring out.

. This naturally leads me to say a few words upon the origin and intent of the licensing act. Colley Cibber tells us, that a broken wit collected a fourth company, who for some time acted plays in the Hay-market, which house the united Drury-lane comedians had quitted. This enterprising person (Henry F—d—g) had sense enough to know, that the best plays with bad actors would turn but to a very poor account; and therefore thought it necessary to give the public some pieces of an extraordinary kind, the poetry of which he conceived ought to be so strong, that the greatest dunce of an actor could not spoil it. He knew too, that as he was in haste to get money, it would take up less time to be
intrepidly

intrepidly abusive, than decently entertaining; that to draw the mob after him, he must rake the channel, and pelt their superiors; that to shew himself somebody, he must come up to Juvenal's advice, and stand the consequence. Such then was the nettlesome modesty he set out with; upon this principle, he produced several frank and free farces, that seemed to knock all distinctions of mankind on the head. Religion, laws, government, priests, judges, and ministers, were all laid flat at the feet of this Herculean satyrist, this Drawcanfir in wit, that spared neither friend nor foe; who, to make his fame immortal, like another Erostratus, set fire to his stage, by writing up to an act of parliament to demolish it.

The most remarkable of these politico-satyrical pieces were Pasquin, the Historical Register, and Eurydice Hissed; but he did not confine himself solely to stage abuse; for about the same time he attacked Sir Robert W——e in a most violent manner in the paper called The Champion, written, as the title set forth, by Hercules Vinegar; and doubtless, the laureat obliquely hints at this title, when he calls him the *Herculean satyrist*.

To Henry F—d—g then are we indebted for the licensing act, and the theatrical power that is now lodged in the licenser; who exercised his authority for the first time in 1738, upon *Gustavus Vasa*, a tragedy, written by Mr. Brooke. Whether it has been productive of more good or evil in its consequences, is a disquisition that would lead me too far out of my way; but such readers as chuse to enter more largely upon this subject, are referred to the periodical productions of that time, wherein they will find it most elaborately discussed.

The next capital character that Quin appeared in at Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, (where the general applause he now met with, compelled the manager to think that he might have some small merit in *Sir John Falstaff*) was that of *Sir John Brute* in the *Provoked Wife*. This play, which was written by *Sir John Vanbrugh*, was revived at Drury-lane about the year 1725, after having been laid aside for some years on account of its immoral tendency. Many of the most offensive parts were now omitted, and the whole night scene, where *Sir John Brute* appears in woman's apparel, was substituted for one wherein the knight represented an inebriate parson, and as such a professed debauchee. Soon

MR. JAMES QUIN. 43

Soon after the revival of this play at Drury-lane, many unavoidable accidents, and none more than the bad reception Cibber's *Love in a Riddle* met with, brought on the dissolution of that company. Booth's ill state of health prevented him for some time before his death appearing on the stage. Mrs. Oldfield's death, which happened in the year 1730, deprived the theatre of one of its greatest ornaments. Mrs. Porter was about the same time lost to the stage, by the dislocation of her leg; and the death of Wilks in the year 1731, gave the finishing stroke to this declining company.

It is now that we may expect to find Mr. Quin shine forth in all his splendor, having no longer those powerful competitors and favourites of the town, Booth and Wilks, to contend with.

The run of the *Beggar's Opera*, about the time of the revival of the *Provoked Wife* at Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, prompted Quin to leave that theatre, where his talents lay dormant, as he could neither perform the part of *Mac-heath*, nor that still more illustrious one of *Harlequin*, which the manager considered as a more capital part than *Hamlet* or *Cato*, and therefore kept it intirely to himself; and to do him justice,

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tice, it must be acknowledged he was very great in this particular *walk*.

When Quin first engaged at Drury-lane, he succeeded the elder Mills in all the capital parts of tragedy; and Delane supplied his place at Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, after having performed for some time with tolerable success at Goodman's-Fields. But it was upon Booth's quitting the stage, on account of his illness, that Quin shone forth in all his splendor; and yet he had the diffidence, upon the first night of his appearing in *Cato*, to insert in the bills, that *the part of Cato would be only attempted by Mr. Quin*. The modesty of this invitation produced a full house, and a favourable audience, but the actor's own peculiar merit effected more. When he came to that part of the play where his dead son is brought in upon the bier, Quin, in speaking these words,

"Thanks to the Gods!—my boy has done his duty,"

so affected the whole house, that they cried out with a continued acclamation, *Booth outdone! Booth outdone!*

Yet this was not the summit of his applause; for when he repeated the famous soliloquy, he was *encored* to that degree, that, though it was submitting to an

impropriety, he indulged the audience with its repetition.



CHAP. VI.

Theatrical revolutions during Mr. Quin's holding the first rank upon the stage. Anecdotes of managers and actors, which set the dramatic transactions of those times in a clear point of view. Theophilus Cibber's treachery to his master, and Quin's treatment of him. An adventure between our hero and a poet.

WE now see Mr. Quin arrived at the summit of his profession, where he remained without a rival for full ten years. But though he was in quiet possession of the first rank upon the stage, the stage itself did not continue in this peaceable state all this while. Various were the fermentations and revolutions of the theatre, during the course of this period, some of the most remarkable of which I shall take notice of, as Mr. Quin's interest and character were very immediately connected with them.

The tyranny of the managers of Drury-lane house, to whom Booth and Cibber
fold.

fold their shares, was so great, that it was unanimously agreed by the whole company to desert their masters, and set up for themselves in the Little Theatre in the Hay-market, which they accordingly did in 1733. The managers, who were highly irritated at this proceeding, were advised to put the act of the twenty-first of queen Anne in force against the deserted heroes. Sir Thomas Deveil, who was always a very active, though not a very successful magistrate, in all theatrical altercations, granted a warrant, by virtue whereof one of the chief performers was taken upon the stage, while he was performing, and committed to Bridewell: but he was discharged, as he was not within the meaning of the act, being a housekeeper, and having a vote for the representatives of the city of Westminster in parliament.

This unexpected triumph operated so strongly upon the Drury-lane managers, that Highmore and his confederates had no thoughts but of abdicating their thrones, which they proposed doing, however, only to the best bidder. And yet if these gentlemen patentees had either been acquainted with the real situation of their revolted actors affairs, or had been possessed of fortitude enough to
have

have undertaken another campaign, the deserters must have been compelled to surrender at discretion.

The manager of the other house had probably been let into the secret, or gained such intelligence, as made him think the Drury-lane patent a desirable acquisition. He accordingly framed the project of becoming the manager of both houses:—what a torrent of pantomimes would the town have been deluged with! and what a comfortable situation would the best actors have been in, had this scheme taken place, when they would have had no other master to have flown to for redress and encouragement! The reason that this design proved abortive, was, that it could not be carried into execution by Rich alone, as he was deficient in the most material point—the *res pecuniaria*. He therefore made application to his friend Mr. Fleetwood, and proposed to him, that he should purchase the patent in his name, as well to secure to him the property he should disburse, as to save appearances with the town, who would, perhaps, become jealous of what might be construed into a monopoly in Rich, and that he would pay Fleetwood at fixed periods such sums,

as would entitle him to a moiety of the profits arising from Drury-lane.

When this project got wind, the actors in the Hay-market were in the utmost consternation lest it should succeed; as they would have been compelled to submit to whatever conditions he might have imposed, so calamitous was the state of their affairs, which became every day more desperate.

At this critical juncture, a misunderstanding arose between Fleetwood and Rich; so that the first, who became a purchaser of five-sixths of the shares of Drury-lane house, broke off all connexion with Rich, and remained sole manager of that theatre. This was a favourable incident to the mutineers, who had a *carte blanche* offered them from Fleetwood, and they accordingly disposed of their scenes and ward-robe to him, and listed under his banner, with better salaries than were ever before paid any company. The general conditions were two hundred pounds a year to each managing actor, and a clear benefit. Quin was engaged at the same time by Fleetwood, but upon still more advantageous terms, and such, indeed, as no hired actor ever had before. This is a proof that he was
 now

now at the summit of his profession, and that he had no competitor either for recompence or applause.

Notwithstanding Theophilus Cibber was among the foremost of the mutineers who found protection under Mr. Fleetwood's banner, of so ungrateful a cast was the progeny of the laureat, that when Mr. Fleetwood was confined by a fit of the gout, he circulated reports that his affairs were in so bad a situation, and he was in such great arrears with his actors, that though he might recover from his indisposition, there was no likelihood of his ever returning to the management of the stage; nay, he prevailed upon his father to exert his influence with the L—d C———n, in order to obtain a licence for another play house, as Mr. Fleetwood had very injuriously treated his principal actors. These reports, which were the offspring of The's brain, had just the effect which every honest man would desire. It was upon this occasion, that some opprobrious words passed between Quin and Cibber, who denied his having had any hand in the propagation of these calumnies. Quin, who had always looked upon him as an impertinent coxcomb, had now as much reason to abhor, as he had before to despise him, and when

The. talked about satisfaction in a gentleman-like manner; Quin said, with a laugh, "Quarrelling with such a fellow as thee, is like sh—t—g on a t—d;" and walked off as cool as if nothing had happened. This was more cutting to The. than if he had said the severest sarcasm that could have been uttered: He never forgave Quin for it, but merely on this account abuses him upon every occasion in what he calls *An Apology for his Life*, which is one of the most trifling insignificant productions that was ever put together; for it cannot be said to be wrote, as every thing that is worth reading in it, is stole from his father's *Apology*. This was also the source of that quarrel, which afterwards ended in a duel and a flight at the Bedford coffee-house, and which will be found in the sequel of this *Life*.

When Cibber had thus thrown himself out of Fleetwood's confidence, Quin supplid his place in presiding over rehearsals, and the perusal of such new plays as were offered.

There is a story told of him, concerning his behaviour to an author upon one of these occasions, which carries with it a good deal the air of truth. A poet had put a tragedy which he had just finished,

finished, into his hands one night behind the scenes, whilst he was still dressed for the character he had performed. Quin put it into his pocket, and never thought any more about it: the bard, who was very impatient to know his sentiments with regard to the piece, waited upon him one morning, in order to hear his doom. Quin gave some reasons for its not being proper for the stage, after having learned the title and fable, which he was before intirely unacquainted with: upon which the poet, whose muse had flattered him with the perspective view of a new suit of cloaths, as well as the clearing the chandler-shop score, in a faltering voice desired to have his piece returned. "There (said Quin) it lies in the window." Upon which poor Bayes repaired to the window, and took up a play which proved to be a comedy, and his muse had brought forth a direful tragedy; whereupon he told Quin of the mistake;—who very pleasantly said, "Faith then, Sir, I have certainly lost your play."—*Lost my play!* cries the poet, almost thunderstruck. "Yes, by G-d, but I have;" replied Quin,— "but look ye, here is a drawer full of both comedies and tragedies—take any two you will in the room of it."—

But this no way satisfied the poet, who imagined that no one's Pegasus had so luxuriant a district to graze on as his own, upon the common of Parnassus.—

“ My play, or a benefit;—if not, Sir,

“ I shall commence a prosecution against

“ you and the manager.”—Such were the

terms of the bard:—he had the run of

the house, and was completely satisfied;

being fully persuaded, that his next pro-

duction (which, by the bye, was the

identical same in a rough copy) would

not fail of being performed.



C H A P. VII.

The difficult task of managers, particularly with regard to writers. The manner in which the different managers of this century have behaved upon these occasions. The genteel method Mr. Garrick pursues. An author's disgrace upon the second night of the representation of his piece. The duty of a manager, according to the late poet laureat.

THE story related of Mr. Quin, in the last chapter, when he was deputy-manager of Drury-lane house, naturally leads to some reflections upon the embarrassments

ments the masters of play-houses must frequently meet with upon these occasions.

If a manager refuses a play, by saying, "That he has so many pieces to bring on this season, that he would not amuse the gentleman with hopes to his prejudice, while, perhaps, the manager of the other house would be very glad of the performance:" he is looked upon as a stupid ignorant coxcomb, to say any thing of a play before he has seen it; or that if ignorance is not the ground-work of his behaviour, partiality must be so; or else he may be giving the preference to contemptible works, whilst he refuses to accept of those that may be of great worth and excellence. If, like Wilks, when he was one of the patentees, he should pay the author compliments on his piece that it did not deserve, and omit mentioning such beauties as might have escaped him, none but a fool could be pleased, and such could never be the author of a work of this nature; and, as a man of sense, he must hold the manager's judgment in the highest contempt. If, like the laureat, he returned a poet his play, with saying, "That it was not fit for the stage;" an author might pertinently reply, "If, Sir, in other respects it is

“ a good piece, it may be easily rendered
“ theatrical, as this is a mechanical qua-
“ lity, and is like the *jeu de theatre* to
“ an actor;—it can never confer merit,
“ but may hide defects.” If, like the
late Mr. Rich, whose judgments were
always particularly *laconic*, he should com-
municate his answer, as this manager
constantly did, in the same identical four
words,—“ It will not do;”—an author
might, perhaps, shrewdly add,—“ for
“ you—who form the same opinion upon
“ all works, except pantomimes.” Or
if, indeed, like Mr. Fleetwood, who
piqued himself upon being the gentle-
man, more particularly on these occa-
sions, as he had *gentlemen only* to deal
with, he should avoid as long as possible
giving the mortifying refusal, and at
length, after having, perhaps, driven the
poor poet to his last shirt, acquit himself
in the most polite terms possible;—a hun-
gry author would certainly damn him
for a fawning equivocating scoundrel, and
for the next toast, in small beer, give,
“ More beef, and less complaisance.”
But if, like a certain manager, who has
presided for almost twenty years over the
best regulated company of comedians
in Europe, he should, when a play is
offered to him, read it with attention,
be

be always accessible to the author, and diligent in giving a fair and candid opinion of the piece, without equivocation or disguise, and such an opinion as would constantly stand the test of sound criticism; no one but the vain, self-sufficient, disappointed poetaster would ever be offended at a similar conduct; and even such a contemptible animal as this, must not be so callous to all literary fame, as not to be better pleased with a genteel representation of his errors and inability, than to be damned the first night of his piece's representation, to the lowest regions of public infamy.

I shall illustrate this observation with a genuine anecdote. In the reign of queen Anne, a solemn bard, who, like Bayes in the Rehearsal, wrote only for fame and reputation, upon the second day's public triumph of his muse, marching in a stately full-bottomed peruke into the lobby of the house, with a lady of condition in his hand, and raising his voice to the Sir Fopling sound, that became the mouth of a man of quality, and calling out—
 “Hey, box-keeper, where is my lady
 “such a one's servant?” was unfortunately answered by honest John Trott, (which then happened to be the box-keeper's real name) “Sir, we have dis-
 3 “missed;

“ missed ; there was not company enough
“ to pay candles.” In which mortal
astonishment it may be sufficient to leave
him, exclaiming against the barbarous
taste of the age, their want of judgment,
and the like.

But the difficulties and embarrassments
which managers labour under, are not
confined merely to poets ; they have many
refractory subjects in their common-
wealth—many turbulent spirits in their
state, who are constantly raising commo-
tions ; the progress of which nothing but
the most vigilant attention, animating
the utmost latitude of human prudence,
can frequently prevent. And therefore,
if when they have gained the public
esteem, by affording the town a rational
and variegated amusement, they may be
supposed to be handsomely rewarded for
their pains, it is no more than what they
most laboriously earn. No reasonable
man ever grudged a lord chancellor his
income, and if small things may be com-
pared with great, by a parity of reason-
ing, no generous man should covet the
much inferior profits of the far more
laborious and embarrassing task of a thea-
trical manager. Perhaps the reader may
not be thoroughly acquainted with the
vocations of a dramatic governor, and
therefore

therefore I shall give him a short sketch of them, as Colley Cibber represented them to the court of King's-bench, when he was counsel in his own cause depending with Sir Richard Steele.

The DUTY of a MANAGER.

“ By our books it is apparent, that the managers have under their care no less than a hundred and forty persons in constant daily pay; and among such numbers, it will be no wonder, if a great number of them are unskilful, and sometimes untractable; all which tempers are to be led or driven, watched and restrained, by the continual skill, care, and patience of the managers. Every manager is obliged in his turn, to attend two or three hours every morning at the rehearsal of plays, and other entertainments for the stage, or else every rehearsal would be but a rude meeting of mirth and jollity. The same attendance is as necessary at every play, during the time of its public action, in which one, or more of us, have constantly been punctual, whether we have had any part in the play or not. A manager ought to be at the reading of every new play, when it is at first offered to the stage, though there is seldom one of those plays
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in twenty, which, upon hearing, proves to be fit for it; and upon such occasions the attendance must be allowed to be as painfully tedious, as the getting rid of the authors of such plays must be disagreeable and difficult. Besides this, a manager is to order all new cloaths, to assist in the fancy and propriety of them, to limit the expence, and to withstand the unreasonable importunities of some, who are apt to think themselves injured, if they are not finer than their fellows. A manager is to direct and oversee the painters, machinists, musicians, singers, and dancers, to have an eye upon the door-keepers, under-servants, and officers, who, without such care, are too often apt to defraud us, or neglect their duty."

Such are the out-lines of the duty of a manager, which must appear no very easy employment to fill with propriety, as it necessarily requires a thorough knowledge of all the things that relate to the stage and its decorations, and an uncommon share of sense and foresight, to apply them to the most advantage. I shall make no farther comment upon this business, which, perhaps, to some of my readers, may be considered as a tedious digression.

gression, though so immediately connected with the person and subject I am writing upon.



C H A P. VIII.

A view of the stage at the time of Mr. Garrick's first appearance. His superior abilities impartially represented.

WE now approach that period, when the great theatrical luminary, who has shone with such transcendent splendor for five-and-twenty years, first made his appearance upon our horizon. Let us for a moment view the state of the stage at this crisis, and the principal actors, whom he so far and suddenly eclipsed, that their names were scarce ever after mentioned but as mere theatrical satellites. We must, however, exclude from this number our buskined hero, though it must at the same time be acknowledged, that he lost his rank in many parts that he before performed without a rival.

Quin was at that time at the head of the Drury lane company, and had not met with any sort of competitor since the death

death of Booth, till Delane having gained the ascendant at Covent-garden, had some blind admirers, who put him upon an equal footing with Quin, of whom he was little more than the copy; and even in those very points which the nicer judges condemned him for, particularly a monotony, which the critics called languid; but this defect Quin could emerge from whenever he chose to exert himself, which he was the more assiduous in now doing, as even his petty rivalship created an emulation in him to distinguish his superiority. On the other hand, Quin's solemn sameness of pronounciation, which communicated so much dignity to the part of Cato, could never be imitated by Delane: add to this, that Quin's action was always elegant, and suited to the character he appeared in; whereas Delane's was seldom or never so. In a word, though the prejudiced, or ill judges might rank Delane in the same class as Quin; the town, whose opinion seldom errs in this respect, by a great majority pronounced our hero still unrivalled.

These then were the two capital actors, at the time that Mr. Garrick made his first appearance in the character of Richard the Third, at Goodman's-Fields, in the year 1740-1, when that theatre was

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was under the management of Mr. Giffard. He displayed in the very earliest dawn a somewhat more than meridian brightness; his excellence dazzled and astonished every one; and the seeing a young man, in no more than his twenty-fourth year, and a novice to the stage, reaching at one single step that height of perfection, which maturity of years and long practical experience had not been able to bestow on the then capital performers of the English stage, was a phenomenon, which could not but become the object of universal speculation, and as universal admiration. Quin was the only actor that could be opposed to him in any particular character; but it was soon manifested, that Garrick's universality, by reason of his natural endowments and acquired accomplishments, would no longer admit of any competitor for theatrical fame: for Mr. Garrick, though low in his person, is well-shaped and neatly proportioned, and having added the qualifications of dancing and fencing to that natural gentility of manner which no art can bestow, but which our great mother nature endows many with from infancy; his deportment is constantly easy, natural, and engaging: his complexion is dark; and the features

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of his face are pleasingly regular, and animated by a full black eye, brilliant and penetrating: his voice is clear, melodious, and commanding, and although it may not possess the strong over-bearing powers of Mossop's, or the musical sweetness of Barry's, yet it appears to have a much greater compass of variety than either; and from Mr. Garrick's judicious manner of conducting it, enjoys that articulation, and piercing distinctness, which renders it equally intelligible, even to the most distant parts of an audience, in the gentle whispers of murmuring love, the half-smothered accents of in-felt passion, or the professed and sometimes awkward concealments of a side-speech in comedy, as in the rants of rage, the darings of despair, or the open violence of tragical enthusiasm.

Such are the out-lines of a picture, that is completely original, whose every feature bears the stamp of nature; for it is from her alone, that this great performer has taken all his lessons; and as she is in herself inexhaustible, it is not surprising that her darling son should find an unlimited scope for change and diversity. To what else can we attribute those innumerable variations of passion, which
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he can so powerfully express? Rage and ridicule, doubt and despair, transport and tenderness, compassion and contempt, love, jealousy, fear, fury, and simplicity; these, and many more that want a name, all in turn take possession of his features, while each in turn appears to be the sole possessor of those features. One night old age sits on his countenance, as if the wrinkles she had stamp'd were indelible; the next, the gaiety and bloom of youth seem to overspread his face, and smooth even those marks, which time and muscular conformation may have really made there. Of these truths no one can be ignorant, who has ever seen him in the several characters of Lear, or Hamlet, Richard, Dorilas, Romeo, or Lufignan; in his Ranger, Bayes, Druggier, Kitely, or Benedick. In a word, there never existed any one performer, that came near his excellence in so great a variety of opposite characters.

And now I have done this justice to Mr. Garrick's singular merit, let it be at the same time remembered, that Quin was still by far the best Sir John Brute, our only Cato, and remained quite unrivalled in Sir John Falstaff. And, indeed, Quin had still many partizans, who would not allow Garrick to be his

superior in any tragic character; but as prejudice and partiality, doubtless, *then* prompted them to support this opinion, it would be ridiculous *now* to maintain it, when even these very sticklers for Quin have long since been convinced of their error; and if they have not publicly recanted, they have been actuated more by pride than candour.



C H A P. IX.

The dramatic characters of Mr. Barry, Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Woffington, Mrs. Pritchard, and Mrs. Clive. Strictures upon Mr. Quin's indelicacy to the ladies; and an apology for suppressing the relation of part of his amours.

ABout the year 1745, Mr. Quin was obliged, by the vicissitudes of Mr. Fleetwood's affairs, to quit Drury-lane theatre, and engaged once more with Mr. Rich at Covent-Garden. It is almost needless to repeat here, that Mr. Garrick and Mr. Quin were considered as the two capital actors, till Mr. Barry made his appearance upon the English stage; but his walk was so entirely confined to
tragedy,

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tragedy, that he did not seem to be a competitor with either of them, but in some particular parts, which were of the more tender cast, and which was a province that Mr. Quin had never attempted. It must be acknowledged, however, that Mr. Barry's success in the parts of Romeo and Castalio, entitled him to a rank with either of them; and that, in the opinion of many, he surpassed even Mr. Garrick in these characters, though he fell far short of him in all others. A fine figure, with a most harmonious voice, added to a great command of expressive features, gave him that ascendancy in the lover's part, which few besides him could ever claim.

It would be injurious to the memory of the actresses of the time, if we were to pass over in silence the names of Cibber, Woffington, Pritchard, and Clive.

Mrs. Cibber's first appearance on the stage was as a singer; in which capacity, the sweetness of her voice, and the strength of her judgment, rendered her very soon conspicuous. Her first attempt as an actress was in the year 1736, in the character of Zara, in Mr. Hill's tragedy of that name, being the first night of its representation; in which part she gave both surprize and delight to the audience, who

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were no less charmed with the beauties of her present performance, than with the prospect of future entertainment, from so valuable an acquisition to the stage; a prospect which was to the end of her days perfectly maintained, and a meridian lustre shone forth equal to what was promised from the morning dawn. Her person was perfectly elegant, and when she was even declined beyond the bloom of youth, and even wanted that *embonpoint*, which sometimes is assistant in concealing the impression made by the hand of time, yet there was so complete a symmetry and proportion in the different parts that constituted this lady's form, that it was impossible to view her figure and not think her young, or look in her face and not consider her handsome. Her voice was beyond conception plaintive and musical, yet far from deficient in powers for the expression of resentment, and so much equal command of features did she possess for the representation of pity or rage, of complacency or disdain, that it would be difficult to say, whether she affected the hearts of the audience most, when playing the gentle, the delicate Celia, or the haughty, the resenting Hermione; in the innocent love-sick Juliet, or in the forsaken, the enraged Alicia. In a word,

she was excellent and inimitable in every cast of tragedy. She made some attempts latterly in comedy, which were not, however, in any degree equal to her excellence in the opposite walk. She departed this life the 30th of January 1766, to the great regret of every admirer of theatrical merit, having left no one behind her that promises soon to supply her place with equal abilities.

Mrs. Woffington may be considered entirely as an original in her way; at the same time that she was an excellent actress in genteel comedy, and even in tragedy, there was no woman that ever yet had appeared upon the stage, who could represent with such ease and elegance the character of a man. Every one who remembers her must recollect that she performed Sir Harry Wildair, in the Trip to the Jubilee, far superior to any actor of her time. She was so happily made, and there was such symmetry and proportion in her frame, that she would have borne the most critical examination of the nicest sculptor. She had besides dispossessed herself of that awkward stiffness and effeminacy which so commonly attend the fair sex in breeches. In fine, she was the perfect contrast of the much celebrated Knayston, who, in king Charles's
time,

time, so successfully appeared in all the female characters, that it was a most nice point to decide between the gentlemen and ladies, whether she was the finest woman, or the prettiest fellow. There is a bon-mot of Quin's, which, though it might be deficient in delicacy, was not, perhaps, destitute of some foundation. Upon her coming off the stage, in the character of Sir Harry Wildair, she said, with no little triumph, "Lord, I believe the whole house think I am a man."—"By G-d, Madam," says he, "half the house knows the contrary."

We now approach a lady whose virtue was always irreproachable, and who has been as great an ornament to the stage, as she has been an honour to her sex. It were scarce necessary after this to repeat her name, or say, I mean Mrs. Pritchard. If her figure is not now so happily suited to the juvenile, gay, and volatile characters, she has so melodious an elocution, so just an action, such expressive features, and with all that *je ne sçai quoi*, which her judgment so properly unites, that we frequently forget Mrs. Pritchard is not eighteen, or that her waist is something more than half a yard round. In a word, she is the only legal successor of Mrs. Oldfield, and in all her cast of parts,

parts, is a most judicious and engaging actress.

Mrs. Clive, whose maiden name was Raftor, was born in the year 1711, and displayed a very early inclination and genius for the stage. Her natural turn of humour, and her pleasing manner of singing songs of spirit, induced some friends to recommend her to Colley Cibber. Her first appearance was in boy's cloaths, in the character of a page in the tragedy of Mithridates, king of Pontus, in which she was introduced only to sing a song. Yet even in this she met with great applause. This was in the year 1728, at which time she was but seventeen years of age; and in the very same season we find, that the audience paid so great attention to her merit in the part of Phillida, in Cibber's *Love in a Riddle*, which was damned, that they let her always peaceably go through her part. In the year 1730, she had an opportunity of displaying most amazing comic powers, in the character of Nell in the *Devil to Pay*. Her merit in this character occasioned her salary to be doubled, and not only established her own reputation with the audience, but fixed the piece itself on the constant list of acting farces; an honour which, perhaps, it would never have

have arrived at, had she not performed the capital character in it, nor may long maintain, when her support in it is lost. To expatiate on her merits as an actress, whilst she keeps within the extensive walk which is adapted to her excellence, would carry me far beyond my design, and indeed be superfluous to those who have ever seen her in these characters.

It is very remarkable, that Mr. Quin and this last mentioned lady could never agree while they were united in the same company: there are several bon mots fathered upon him, which he is said to have spoken upon her account; but as they are too indelicate and indecent to be printed, they cannot find a place here. I am sorry to be obliged to say, that Quin's wit knew no bounds, and that he was frequently severe and lascivious even to the ladies. It is, indeed, averred, but upon what foundation I will not take upon me to say, that the first disgust Quin took to this lady, was upon his offering some indecencies to her in her dressing-room; she made a complaint to the manager, who rebuked him for his conduct. This lady's virtue had never been impeached, and he ought not therefore to have supposed, that so brutish an attack, as it is said, he made upon her, could

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could meet with success; but Sir John Falstaff would not give himself much time or trouble in his amours; and it was a rule with him, if he did not succeed at the first onset, never to rally his forces. Perhaps he might think that the rank he bore as an actor, and that peculiarity of humour for which he was so famous, entitled him to the favour of every actress that he thought worthy of his notice. He had certainly, in his latter days, laid aside much of that delicacy of sentiment which must have actuated him in his juvenile years; for it cannot be supposed, that Mrs. L——, for whom he risked so much, was as easily obtained as a hackney-coach off the stand.

What is here said, may serve as a specimen of his manner of addressing the ladies, whilst he was upon the stage, and may be considered as an apology for not enumerating any more of his intrigues.

C H A P. X.

Mr. Garrick's theatrical pursuits. Mr. Rich's contemptible opinion of actors. The mild treatment the French players met with in 1748; and the severe treatment of the foreign dancers in 1755. Modern theatrical tumults, and their causes, &c.

MR. Garrick acted but one season at Goodman's Fields, notwithstanding the crowded and polite audiences he attracted thither from the west-end of the town. Having very advantageous proposals made him from Dublin, he repaired to that city in the summer of the same year, where he found the like tribute paid to his merit, as he had received from his own countrymen. To the service of the latter, however, he esteemed himself more immediately bound, and therefore, in the ensuing winter, engaged himself with Mr. Fleetwood at Drury-lane, where he continued to perform till the year 1745; in the winter of which, he again went over to Ireland, and continued there through the whole of that season, being a joint manager with Mr. Sheridan, in the direction and profits of the Theatre-Royal in Smock-Alley.

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From thence he returned to England, and was engaged for the season of 1746, with the late Mr. Rich at Covent-Garden, where he played Ranger in Dr. Hoadley's *Suspicious Husband*, and Fribble in his own farce of *Miss in her Teens*. This, however, was his last performance as an hired actor; for in the close of that season, Mr. Fleetwood's patent for the management of Drury-lane being expired, and that gentleman having no inclination to pursue farther a design, by which, from his want of acquaintance with the proper conduct of it, or some other reasons, he had already considerably impaired his fortune; Mr. Garrick, in conjunction with Mr. Lacey, purchased the property of that theatre, together with the renovation of the patent; and in the winter of 1747, opened with the best part of Mr. Fleetwood's former company, and the great additional strength of Mr. Barry, Mrs. Cibber, and Mrs. Pritchard, from Covent Garden. These, with Mr. Garrick and Mr. Quin, had all acted together the preceding winter at Covent-Garden; but now Mr. Rich had no capital performer remaining but Mr. Quin, who never after quitted him, till he retired from the stage.

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Mr. Garrick, upon the opening of Drury-lane theatre under his management, spoke an excellent prologue, which was written by Mr. Samuel Johnson, and which concluded with this address to the town :

“ Then prompt no more the follies you decry,
 “ As tyrants doom their tools of guilt to die ;
 “ 'Tis yours, this night, to bid the reign commence
 “ Of rescu'd nature, and reviving sense ;
 “ To chase the charms of sound, the pomp of show,
 “ For useful mirth, and salutary woe ;
 “ Bid scenic virtue form the rising age,
 “ And truth diffuse her radiance from the stage.”

Notwithstanding so formidable a company were united at Drury-lanē, under Mr. Garrick's banner, Quin alone brought full houses for a whole season at Covent-Garden ; and Rich was pleased to say, That he was glad he had got rid of such turbulent servants, who were better paid than the admirals of his majesty's navy, without being of any advantage either to him or the state. If he had spoke his mind, he did not think Quin's presiding at the head of his company was of any great benefit to him ; for he attributed the good houses he had intirely to his *pan-tomimes*, which he now *instructed* the town with, and which he considered as a more rational

rational entertainment than all Shakespear's works together. This may, perhaps, be thought too severe by some of his friends, and it may be urged, that though he gratified the vitiated taste of the town with *Harlequinades*, he was sensible that it was an invasion of Melpomene and Thalia's territories; but the amazing expence he was at for scenes and decorations; his performing Harlequin still himself in some particular scenes; his turning off three of his capital performers, and at length, his dismissing Quin; will clearly prove, that he looked upon pantomime as a superior kind of entertainment to either tragedy or comedy.

After the peace of Aix la Chapelle, which was concluded in 1748, a troop of French actors once more paid us a visit in this capital. They hired the Little Theatre in the Hay-market upon their own account, and obtained a licence for representing French plays. On the first night of their performance, there was a monstrous tumult, which seemed to threaten a total demolition; but the young men of quality, who did not chuse to be interrupted in any diversion that had the royal licence, broke the heads of such of the audience as opposed the performance,

and, by superiority of numbers, at length turned them out. However, the representation of French plays had but a very short run; the manager was ruined, and the performers begged about the streets.

The French, or rather foreign dancers did not meet with so mild a treatment at Drury-lane in 1755. It appeared by the list that was then printed, that there were not above two Frenchmen among them; but the cry was so great against them, that no reason could be heard; and though this was the most magnificent spectacle in the ballet-way, that ever was represented, they were not suffered to proceed; and the audience not only pulled up the benches in the pit, demolished the scenes and chandeliers, and some of the sconces; but after having vented part of their rage at the theatre, they repaired to Mr. Garrick's house in Southampton-street, and broke every window in the front of it. This attempt to divert the town cost the managers, besides the expence of scenery and decorations which they prepared for the representation, upwards of a thousand pounds, by the damage they sustained from the depredations of the rioters.

From this time the theatres remained very peaceable till the winter of the
year

year 1762; and though it is rather antedating events to mention it here, as I shall say but a few words upon it, the reader will, it is hoped, pardon a small anachronism, to be no farther disturbed hereafter with the tumults of the theatre. The subject of this disturbance was the non-admittance of half-price to pantomimes. But this was rather the pretext than the cause; as the real source of this tumult might be traced to a misunderstanding between a certain Hibernian genius and Mr. Garrick, after he had been the manager's guest and toady-eater for some years: for having wrote a play, which was not approved of, and therefore not acted, all his former adulation was turned into scurrility and abuse; he attacked the manager in the public news-papers, criticised his acting, censured his gesticulation, condemned his pronunciation, and tortured his œconomy into parsimony and meanness. Not contented with this literary revenge, he waited for an opportunity to injure him in his property, and make him odious in the eyes of the town. An opportunity at length occurred, and this individual, of no great consequence in life, had his vanity and resentment so far gratified, as to give laws to both theatres with respect to the prices of admittance.

These are so many corroborating evidences of the inutility of the military power at the theatres; and if we take a retrospective view of the history of the stage, from the time of the restoration of king Charles, and the restoration of the drama, to the year 1721, when the military aid was called in, we find there were few, if any, tumults at the theatres, before that period; and that such delinquents as were refractory, and would disturb the amusement of the rest of the audience, were more severely punished before, than since it took place.



CHAP. XI.

The quarrel between Rich and Quin impartially related. Quin leaves the stage. His connexions and acquaintance. His generous behaviour to Mr. Thomson. The effect of speaking the prologue to Coriolanus.

WE now approach that period, when Mr. Quin's loss to the stage was, in many respects, irreparable. At the end of the winter of the year 1748. Quin having taken umbrage at Rich's behaviour,

behaviour, retired in a fit of spleen and resentment to Bath, notwithstanding his being under engagements to that manager. Though Rich ought to have known that Quin never put up with any insult, and though he too late repented of what he had done, yet he thought by treating him with silent contempt, to make him submit to his own terms. On the other hand, Quin, whose generous heart began now to relent, having used his old acquaintance so cavalierly, resolved to sacrifice his resentment to his friendship, and wrote early the next season a laconic epistle to Rich in these words :

I am at Bath. QUIN.

Rich thought this by no means a sufficient apology for his behaviour, and returned an answer, in almost as laconic, though not quite so civil a manner.

Stay there, and be damned. RICH.

This reply cost the public one of the greatest ornaments of the stage, for as he and Mr. Garrick did not agree very well together, whilst they continued rival actors, he could not brook submitting to his competitor in dramatic fame ; and as
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he now took a firm resolution of never engaging again with *so insolent a blockhead*, as he stiled Rich for this answer, there was no theatrical door open for him, without he had turned opera singer. He, nevertheless, came from Bath in the year 1749, to play the part of Othello at Covent-Garden theatre, for the benefit of the unhappy sufferers by the fire in Cornhill, which happened on the 25th of March, in the year 1748; and he afterwards continued many successive years to come constantly to London, to perform the character of Sir John Falstaff, for his old and trusty friend Ryan; but in the year 1754, having lost two of his front teeth, he was compelled to decline the task, and wrote a comic epistle to Ryan upon the occasion.

My dear Friend,

There is no person on earth, whom I would sooner serve than RYAN—but, by G-d, I will whistle Falstaff for no man.

Thus have we gone through the theatrical character of Mr. Quin, who having arrived at the summit of his profession, prudently retired to a private retreat, where, if he did not add to the lustre of his reputation as an actor, he avoided
diminish-

MR. JAMES QUIN. 81

diminishing it as such, and never sullied it as a man. If he has not left behind him any one who can fill all his most important parts so perfectly as himself; yet, as long as Mr. Garrick chuses to indulge us with his performance, great justice will be done to Lear, Hamlet, and Sir John Brute; in Barry, we may still find an Othello and a Jaffier; in Mossop, a Zanga; and in Shuter, a Falstaff.

Whilst Mr. Quin continued upon the stage, he constantly kept company with the greatest geniuses of the age; he was well known to Pope and Swift, and the present Earl of C———d often invited him to his table; but there was none for whom he entertained a higher esteem than Mr. James Thomson, author of the Seasons, and many dramatic pieces. This genius had, in the early part of his life, by his writings, and the recommendations they gave him, constantly enjoyed a very comfortable subsistence; he had travelled as a companion with the honourable Mr. Charles Talbot, with whom he visited most of the courts of Europe, and returned with his views greatly enlarged, not of exterior nature only, and the works of art, but of human life and manners, and of the constitution and policy of the several states, their con-

connections, and their religious institutions. Upon his return to England, the Chancellor, at Mr. Talbot's recommendation, made him his secretary of briefs, a place of little attendance, suiting his retired indolent way of life, and equal to all his wants. This place fell, when death not long after deprived him of his noble patron, and he then found himself reduced to a state of precarious dependence; in this situation, having created some few debts, and his creditors finding that he had no longer any certain support, became inexorable, and imagined by confinement to force that from his friends which his modesty would not permit him to ask.

One of these occasions furnished Mr. Quin with an opportunity of displaying the natural goodness of his heart, and the disinterestedness of his friendship. Hearing that Thomson was confined in a spunging-house, for a debt of about seventy pounds, he repaired to the place, and having enquired for, was introduced to the bard. Thomson was a good deal disconcerted at seeing Quin in such a place, as he had always taken great pains to conceal his wants, and the more so, as Quin told him he was come to sup with him, being conscious that all the money he

he was possessed of would scarce procure a good one, and that there was no credit to be expected in those houses. His anxiety upon this head was however removed, upon Quin's informing him, That as he supposed it would have been inconvenient to have had the supper dressed at the place they were in, he had ordered it from an adjacent tavern; and as a prelude, half a dozen of claret was introduced. Supper being over, and the bottle circulating pretty briskly, Quin said, "It is time now we should balance accounts:" this astonished Thomson, who imagined he had some demand upon him—but Quin perceiving it, continued, "Mr. Thomson, the pleasure I have had in perusing your works, I cannot estimate at less than a hundred pounds, and I insist upon now acquitting the debt:"—on saying this, he put down a note of that value, and took his leave, without waiting for a reply.

By this means was Thomson released from confinement; and Quin had the pleasure to see him a few years after again in affluence, having obtained the place of surveyor-general of the Leeward Islands. After this he wrote several dramatic pieces, amongst others his tragedy of Agamemnon, which was acted

with applause in 1738; and the tragedy of Edward and Eleanora, which he prepared for the stage the ensuing year, when he was refused a licence for it. Coriolanus was the last dramatic piece he wrote, and had not yet been acted, as the prologue testifies, at the time of his death in 1748. This pleasing poet's principal merit not lying in the dramatic way, and this, though the last, being far from the best of his works, even of that kind, I cannot pay any very exalted compliments to the piece; yet, in justice to the amiable character of its author, I must not avoid calling to mind in this place, the grateful tribute of sensibility paid to his memory at the first representation of it; when, on a recapitulation of his loss in the prologue, spoken by Mr. Quin, upon his saying in a manner peculiarly affecting, and not without the visible tear trickling down his cheek,

- " I come not here your candour to implore,
- " For scenes whose author is—alas! no more.
- " He wants no advocate his cause to plead;
- " You yourselves will be patrons of the dead;—"

scarce an eye but began to moisten, and ere he had finished the prologue, a tributary tear was bestowed by almost every spectator, so general was the sense shewn of the value of a good and moral man.

C H A P. XII.

The attention that was paid Mr. Quin by the late Prince of Wales. Is appointed tutor for the English language to his royal highness's children. They perform plays under his tuition. His extatic exclamation upon a public occasion. His rencounter with Theophilus Cibber at the Bedford coffee-house. His retreat to Bath, and manner of living there.

MR. Quin had, during the course of his acting, from his judgment in the English language, and the knowledge of the history of Great Britain, corrected many mistakes which our immortal bard Shakespeare had by oversight, or the volatileness of his genius, suffered to creep into his works ; he also changed many obsolete phrases in his favourite poet, and restored the proper pronounciation of various words to the stage, from whence it had been long banished. These talents, joined to his merit as an actor, recommended him to the observation of his late royal highness the Prince of Wales, father to his present Majesty, who appointed him to instruct his children in the true pronounciation of their mother tongue. In order to accomplish this

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the more effectually, it was necessary they should accustom themselves to the reading of Milton, and some of our best dramatic poets; this naturally created in them a desire to perform the parts they rehearsed; and his late royal highness, who was a tender and indulgent father, readily gratified their inclination. Mr. Quin perfected his royal pupils in their parts, and his present Majesty, with his brothers and sisters, represented several plays under his tuition at Leicester-house.

Nothing could surpass the joy he felt, when he was from time to time informed of the virtuous and gracious disposition of his royal pupil, contemplating with pleasure the felicity of the nation under so good and just a prince; and upon being informed with what elegance and noble propriety his Majesty delivered his first gracious speech from the throne, he cried out in a kind of extasy—"Ay—I taught the boy to speak!"—Nor did his Majesty forget his old tutor, though so remote from court; for it is positively averred, that soon after his accession to the throne, he gave orders, without any application being made to him, that a genteel pension should be paid Mr. Quin during his life.

MR. JAMES QUIN. 87

It is true, that Mr. Quin was not in absolute need of this royal benefaction; for, upon quitting the stage, he thought it was prudent to make some provision for the remainder of his days, and as he was never married, and had none but distant relations, he resolved to sink half of his small fortune, in order to procure an easy competence. The duke of B——, who always professed a great regard for him, hearing of his design, sent for him, and very generously told him, that he would grant him an annuity for his life, upon much better terms than any he could procure from persons who made a profession of granting annuities; and so in reality he did, for Mr. Quin obtained two hundred pounds a year for two thousand pounds. With this provision then, and about two thousand more he had in the funds, he retired to Bath, a place he had always in his eye for a retreat, as the manner of living, and the company that associated there, were so entirely consonant to his plan of life; he accordingly hired a house there, and had it fitted up in a decent, not elegant, manner.

We may now suppose Mr. Quin at Bath; but before we fix him there for good, we must relate an adventure that happened at the Bedford coffee-house

about this time. The Cibber, whose impertinence constantly kept pace with his vanity, having taken something amiss that Quin had said concerning his acting*, came one night strutting into the coffee-house, and having walked up to the fire-place, he said, "He was come to call that *capon-loined rascal* to an account for taking liberties with his character." Somebody told him, that he had passed by Quin, who was sitting at the other end of the room in the window—"Ay, so I have sure enough," says he, "but I see he is busy talking to Rich, and I won't disturb them now, I'll take another opportunity."—"But," continued his informer, finding the backwardness of Cibber, and willing to have some sport, "he sets off for Bath to-morrow, and may not, perhaps, be in town again this twelvemonth."—"Is that the case," said Cibber, (somewhat nettled at finding his courage was suspected) "then I'll e'en chastise him now."—Upon this he goes up to Quin, and calls out aloud, "You—Mr. Quin, I think you call yourself, I insist upon satisfaction for the affront you gave me yester-

* This was the pretext ; but the real source of this quarrel may be traced in CHAP. VI.

" day—

“ day—demme.”——“ If you have a
 “ mind to be flogged,” (replied Quin)
 “ I’ll do it for you with all my heart,
 “ d-mn me.” “ Draw, Sir,” resumed
 Cibber, “ or I’ll be through your guts
 “ this instant.”——“ This (said Quin)
 “ is an improper place to rehearse Lord
 “ Foppington in; but if you’ll go under
 “ the Piazza, I may, perhaps, make you
 “ put up your sword faster than you drew
 “ it.”——Cibber now went out; Quin fol-
 lowed, when they immediately drew—
 Cibber parried, and retreated as far as
 the garden rails, when Quin, tired with
 trifling so long, made a lunge, in doing
 which he tumbled over a stone: Cibber
 taking the advantage of the accident,
 made a thrust at him, slightly wounded
 him in the forehead, and run off full
 speed towards the church, as if for sanc-
 tuary.

Cibber put to flight, and Quin’s wound
 dressed; the latter set out, according to
 his intention, the next day for Bath; and
 now let us take a view of his manner of
 living in this city: to do this, it will be
 necessary to observe how people in gene-
 ral pass their time here. It is customary
 to begin the morning by bathing, which
 continues from six till about nine; the
 company then repair to the pump-house,

some to drink the hot waters, but more for pastime, as they are here amused by a band of music, which fills up the intervals of wit and pleasantry. From hence the ladies withdraw to the female coffee-house, and from thence to their lodgings to breakfast; the gentlemen at the same time withdraw to their coffee-houses, to read the papers, and converse upon the news of the day, or such topics as may occasionally occur; and it must be acknowledged that this is done with a freedom and ease not to be met with in the coffee or chocolate-houses of this city, for all restraint is there laid aside, and every one looks upon the present company as he would a set of old acquaintance, whom he had known for many years. Public breakfasts are often given by persons of rank at the assembly houses, and sometimes private concerts. There are also in the morning lectures read upon various branches of arts and sciences, for those who are inclined to improve their knowledge or refresh their memories. At noon the company appear upon the Parade and other walks, when they form parties for card-playing or dancing for the evening. The more studious may now amuse themselves at the booksellers shops, to which and the coffee-houses, where they

they are allowed the use of pen and paper, they subscribe upon their arrival. We may now suppose it dinner-time, and if our friend partook of all the exercises of the morning, he was not behind-hand in playing a pretty good knife and fork; as Bath is furnished with elegant provisions of every kind, and excellent cooks. Dinner being finished, the company meet again at the pump-house, when, if fine weather, they adjourn to the walks, and from thence repair to the assembly to drink tea. The evening concludes according to their respective engagements, either in visiting, at the play, or the ball. Thus Bath yields a continued rotation of diversions, and people of all ways of thinking, even from the libertine to the methodist, have it in their power to compleat the day with employment agreeable to their taste and disposition. Quin, who moved in the happy medium between both, could doubtless avail himself of the pastimes this agreeable place affords: if he did not often rise at six to bathe, or drink hot water in the pump-room, for the sake of being in fashion, he could enjoy the sprightliness of the conversation, and join in with the humourist or the satirist; he could comment upon the news of the day, with the

8

politician

The wtlings of Bath constantly buzzing about him, to catch each accent falling from his tongue, in order to pass it current for their own, were not contented with robbing him of his wit, but more than once attacked his reputation; for not to mention the ridiculous reports of his marriage at church, where they would insinuate he had not been for many years; what but the highest pitch of malice could have framed the report which was spread of his design to supplant beau Nash, during his life, in the post of Master of the Ceremonies? As this affair has made some noise, and has already appeared in print, it will be necessary to consider it with more attention than reports of a less serious nature.

A person of Nash's acquaintance in London, who pretended to have great influence with lord C——, informed him by letter, that Quin was interceding to supplant him in his post of Master of the Ceremonies; and to give this some colour, he transmitted to him at the same time a letter, supposed to be written from Quin at Bath to his lordship in town, which was under a flying cover, to be transmitted to my lord by Nash's correspondent. It is amazing that this officious friend to the old beau could so far build upon his credulity

credulity and want of discernment, as to impose upon him such a letter as he made Quin write to my lord, as the grammar and spelling must at once have detected the imposition to a person who would give himself a moment's time to reflect; and yet Nash was so far imposed upon, as to print the letter *verbatim*, and disperse it, in order to expose Quin's insincerity and ignorance, without considering that they recoiled with double force upon himself.

We find this letter inserted in Nash's Life, lately printed; and as the reader will certainly not be displeased to see it here, in order to clear Mr. Quin from the imputation of being its author, we shall transcribe it in the dress we there meet with it.

The letter from the intermediate correspondent to Mr. Nash, is as follows:

Dear Nash, London, Oct. 8, 1760.

TWO posts ago I received a letter from Quin, the old player, covering one to my lord, which he left open for my perusal, which, after reading, he desired I might seal up and deliver. The request he makes is so extraordinary, that it has induced me to send you the copy of his letter to my lord, which is as follows:

My

My dear Lord, Bath, Oct. 3, 1760.

OLD beaux Knash has made himself so disagreeable here to all the company that comes here to Bath, that the Corporation of this City have it now under their consideration to remove him from being Master of the Ceremoines, should he be continued, the inhabitants of this city will be ruined, as the best company declines to come to Bath, on his accⁿ.

Give me leave to shew to your lordship how he behaved at the first ball he had here this^s season, which was Tu'sday last. A younge lady was as'ked to dance a minueat.—She begg the gent^m. would be pleased to exquise here, as she did not chuse to dance; upon this^s old Nash called out so as to be heard by all the company in the room—G—dam yo, Madam, what buisness have yo here, if yo do not dance—upon which the lady was so afrighted she rose and danced,—the res's^t of the company was so much offended, that not one lady more would dance a minueat that night. In the country dance^s no person of note danced except two boys' lords S—— and T——, the rest of the company that danced waire only the families of all the haberdas'ber's, machinikes, and inkeepers, in the three kingdoms' brushed up and colected together.

I have

I have known upon such an occasion as this's seventeen Dutcheſs' and Counteſs' to be at the opening of the ball at Bath, now not one. This man by his' pride and extravagancie has out lived his' reaſon it would be happy for this' city that he was dead; and is now only fit to reed Shirlock upon death by which he may ſave his ſoul, and gaine more than all the proffits he can make, by his white batt, ſuppoſe it was to be died red;

The favr. I have now to reques't by what I now have wrote yo; is that your lordſhip will be ſo kind as to ſpeke to Mr. Pitt for to recommend me to the Corporation of this City to ſuccede this old Sinner as Maſter of the Cerremonies and yo will much oblige

*My Lord your
Lord^s. Hm^e. and
Ob^t. Ser^t.*

N. B. There was ſome other private matters and offers in Quin's letter to my lord, which do not relate to you.

If it were neceſſary to prove, that it was impoſſible Mr. Quin could ever write ſuch a collection of unintelligible nonſenſe, it would only require a compariſon of the different parts of this extraordinary epiſtle. In the firſt line the writer
ſpells

spells *Nash's* name with a *K*, and yet presently after he spells it right; the author makes him write *dead* without the *a*, and yet he immediately spells *death* with the *a*; in one part he writes *ceremonies* with the *i* before the *n*, and presently makes him put it in the proper place; but to recompense for this *unintentional* correctness, he puts a couple of *r*'s. It were, indeed, needless to comment upon so ridiculous a composition, which at the first view proves itself an imposition and a forgery.

With respect to Quin's being desirous of obtaining the office of Master of the Ceremonies at Bath, it will be only necessary to take a short retrospect of the last fifteen years of his life: first, his retreat from the stage, by which he sacrificed between twelve and fourteen hundred pounds a year, an income he could never expect to gain in quality of Master of the Ceremonies; secondly, his declining to appear in public for even his friend Ryan, on account of his age and infirmities; and thirdly, upon Nash's death, his not taking the least step that indicated a desire of becoming his successor; a design he might then, no doubt, have easily accomplished, as it was at that time an employ that almost went a-

K

begging.

begging. As I imagine the reader is by this time thoroughly convinced that Mr. Quin was neither the author of the letter attributed to him, or any way desirous of supplanting Nash as Master of the Ceremonies, we shall dismiss the subject with a short remark, which is, that Nash must at the time he took so much pains to circulate this imposition, have been upon the verge of dotage; and that doubtless, the suspicion he had of Quin's being the real author, joined to the latter's resentment for entertaining so mean an opinion of him, must have occasioned that coldness which continued between them till the time of Nash's death, as they never had any open rupture, or any private misunderstanding, besides this, that ever transpired.

As I have been obliged through impartiality to censure Mr. Nash's conduct in this affair, I will in turn acknowledge his merits, and must own that no man was ever better calculated than himself for the office he filled, so long as his memory and other abilities were unimpaired by age; for it is certain, that he greatly polished the manners of the age, and brought Bath to that regularity and perfection which we now see it, not without many struggles against prejudice and custom.

tom. It is true, he soon prevailed upon the ladies to discontinue wearing aprons, by a piece of effrontery that would have been highly resented in any other person; but as King of Bath he reigned with absolute sway.—He one night stripped off the duchess of Q—nsb—y's apron, and threw it upon one of the back benches amongst the ladies maids, saying, That aprons were only fit for Abigails to appear in. But the men were more refractory, and it was some time before he could bring them to obedience: they would frequently appear at the ball in boots, and would generally come to the rooms with swords. The first impropriety he rallied them out of, by the representation of a puppet-show, where Punch appeared booted and spurred, in the character of a country squire, and upon his wedding-night was going to bed with them on; when his lady remonstrating at his extravagance, he replied, “ You may as well bid me
 “ pull off my legs—I ride in boots—I
 “ dance in boots—I do every thing in
 “ boots—it is all the fashion at Bath, and
 “ I never intend to quit them as long as
 “ I live.” Though this *burlesque* had its desired effect; he had not yet succeeded in his design upon swords, when an affair happened at Bath, which proved so power-

ful an auxiliary to him, that he beat them out of the field without any other weapons than common sense and reason. The affair here mentioned was as follows: Two gamesters, whose names were Clarke and Taylor, fought a duel by torch-light in the grove. Taylor was run through the body, but lived seven years after, at which time his wound breaking out afresh, it caused his death. Clarke from that time pretended to be a Quaker, but the orthodox brethren never cordially received him among their number, and he died some years after in poverty and contrition. The rashness of a losing gamester is not now so much to be dreaded at Bath, and a man may escape with his life after the loss of his fortune.



C H A P. XIV.

*Some secret history, and original poetry ;
with animadversions, remarks, comparisons,
&c. &c. &c.*

IN the last chapter it was necessary to state some facts, and examine them with impartiality, that a proper judgment might be formed of the integrity of Mr. Quin, and the malignity of his enemies.

enemies. We are now going to relate a fact that will in some degree corroborate what has been just supported ; that is, in how *unimportant* a light he considered the post of Master of the Ceremonies at Bath, to which Nash alone could communicate consequence, by his being so peculiarly formed to fill it, and give it, at least, an imaginary dignity.

It is well known at Bath, that when Nash was by the inexorable tyrant compelled to relinquish his ideal crown, the present Master of the Ceremonies was not even thought of as his successor. Mr. D—— being, however, at that time accidentally at Bath, and having lately complimented a certain noble lord in a poem, he, half in jest and half in earnest, said, Suppose we make D—— King of Bath : this proposal was seconded by two or three ladies, who had been obliquely praised in the same piece, and they imagined it would be no small feather in their cap, if they could say they had the Master of the Ceremonies for their panegyrist. Accordingly, Mr. D—— was, by these ladies interest, without opposition elected.

Though Mr. D—— did every thing in his power to render himself agreeable, there still remained some objections to his

person and abilities ; and upon a certain woman of fashion being overlooked in the making up of a party, the clamour was so strongly raised against him, that it was agitated whether or no he should not be deposed : but as every thing must be done with a grace at Bath, a conference was held to determine in what manner he should be *remercie*. No one was supposed to understand punctilios of this sort better than Quin, and he was accordingly consulted. “ My lord,” said he to the nobleman who applied to him, “ if you have a mind to put him out, do it at once, and clap an extinguisher over him.”

Quin’s advice was taken, and Mr. D—— was for a time supplanted by Monsieur ——, who with all the abject servility and *outrée politesse* for which his countrymen are so celebrated, could not give so much satisfaction as his poetical predecessor.

Mr. D—— during his banishment, was assiduously employed in canvassing for favour and protection from his former patrons the next season ; and he exerted his talents to ridicule those who had been instrumental in dethroning him. Quin appeared to him, by the advice he gave, as one of the most formidable and dangerous

rous of his enemies ; and he could not, therefore, let him escape the lash of his satirical pen. An Epigram which Mr. D—— wrote upon this occasion, and which was handed about at Arthur's, lady N——'s rout, and of which a few copies were obtained, though it never yet appeared in print, will, doubtless, be acceptable to the reader, as he may rely upon its being genuine.

AN EPIGRAM CORRECTED.

WHEN Quin of all grace and all dignity void,
Murder'd Cato the censor, and Brutus de-
stroy'd,

He strutted, he mouth'd; you no passion could trace
In his action, delivery, or plumb-pudding face;
When he massacred Comus the gay god of mirth,
He was suffered because we of actors had dearth.
But when Foote with strong judgment, and true
genuine wit,

Upon all his peculiar absurdities hit;
When Garrick arose, with those talents and fire,
Which nature and all the nine muses inspire,
Poor Gurs was neglected, or laugh'd off the stage:
So bursting with envy, and tortur'd with rage,
He damn'd the whole town in a fury and fled,
Little Bayes an extinguisher clapp'd on his head.

Yet we never shall Falstaff behold so well done,
With such character, humour, such spirit, such fun,
So great that we knew not which most to admire,
Glutton, parasite, pander, pimp, lecher, or liar;
He felt as he spoke, nature's dictates are true,
When he acted the part, his own picture he drew.
Though

Though it cannot with justice be said, that this production did any great honour to the muse of Mr. D——, yet it must be owned that Quin was not a little nettled at it; and Mr. D—— would have found a very dangerous opponent in his irritated antagonist, if he had not fallen upon a lucky expedient to soften his resentment.

It was well known that Mr. Quin had a particular veneration for John Dory, and Mr. D—— having at this time an acquaintance at Plymouth, he wrote to him in the most pressing terms, *not to fail upon his return to bring up as many John Dories as he could possibly cram in the post-chaise; to take particular care to have them of the best kind that could be got; and that he would make him any possible return in his power, as his future welfare entirely depended on it.* The sea-officer who was Mr. D——'s correspondent, executed his commission so completely, and arrived so critically at Bath with his cargo, at a time that there were no John Dories to be had at any price in that part of the country, that Quin, upon receiving the present, was perfectly reconciled to Mr. D——, and entirely forgave him for his satirical attempt in rhyme.

Quin

Quin, having once professed a friendship for a person, never withdrew it, unless he had the most cogent reasons for his conduct; so that D—— was now extremely elated with the prospect of Quin's protection, and thereupon renewed with additional assiduity his applications to the leading nobility of Bath, in order to be reinstated in his former office. Nor were his hopes groundless, for from the moment it was known that Quin had given him his suffrage, every one eagerly endeavoured to follow his example; and the little Monarch of Bath once more regained his throne.

There are many characters in life whose peculiarities are ornamental to them; but which in men of a different stamp are ridiculous and disgusting. Nash was by nature formed for all that ostentatious frivolity, so requisite in a Master of the Ceremonies: he was in every thing original;—there was a whimsical refinement in his person, dress, and behaviour; it was habitual to him, and therefore sat so easy upon him, that no stranger who came to Bath, ever expressed any surprize at his uncommon manner and appearance. Mr. D—— probably thought that when he succeeded him in office, foppery and extravagance were its necessary appendages.

No

No man in England had ever thought of wearing a white hat before Nash, and the reason he gave for this peculiarity (for he did nothing without some plausible plea, at least to himself) was, that it might not be changed. Mr. D—— has put on the white hat, and alledged the same reason, though he has actually lost two, and is now consulting three hatters upon the proper cock of the third. Nash always wore his stock-buckle in front, because he said he had a wen in his neck, which would be very painful to him if too much pressed.—Mr. D—— has no wen yet in his neck, and therefore, at present, wears his stock-buckle like other people; but he is in great hopes one is forming. Nash, in the severest winter, never wore his waistcoat buttoned, but his shirt-bosom was constantly visible: Mr. D—— intends to attempt the same juvenile appearance, as soon as the weather grows warm, and he can with safety lay by his flannel waistcoat.

Such strict conformity in Mr. D—— to his predecessor's conduct, must convince every one that he never intends making any innovations upon the public or private government with which he is intrusted; and therefore, every admirer of the pastimes and amusements of Bath
may

may rest assured, that though Nash and Quin are no more, *decency, good manners, and proper regulations*, will still continue to prevail, while Mr. D—— remains in peaceable possession of his throne.



C H A P. XV.

The good intelligence that latterly subsisted between Mr. Garrick and Mr. Quin. Visits him every summer at Hampton. The peculiar facetiousness of the company in the excursion of 1765; poetry written upon the occasion.—His illness.—His death.

FROM the time that Quin retired from the stage, a good harmony subsisted, and a regular correspondence was carried on, between Mr. Garrick and him; and when he paid a visit to his friends in this metropolis once a year, as he generally did in autumn, he as constantly passed a week or two at Mr. Garrick's villa at Hampton. His last excursion thither in the summer of 1765, was productive of the most agreeable sallies of wit and merriment: Mr. Garrick's travels furnished such new and entertaining topics of discourse, and Mr. Quin's remarks such unexpected

unexpected strokes of fancy, as enlivened the conversation to a degree that is almost incredible. Mr. ——— the poet, had also his share in the entertainment that was afforded, and besides a plenteous discharge of that inexhaustible fund of ready wit which so spontaneously flows from him, his poetical vein was raised to such a pitch, that he could not suppress some extempore lines, which involuntarily escaped him. This put the whole company into a poetical mood, and gave birth to the following little pieces, that have at different times made their way to the public.

QUIN'S SOLILOQUY,

On seeing Duke HUMPHRY at St. ALBANS.

A Plague on Ægypt's arts, I say!
 Embalm the dead! on senseless clay
 Rich wines and spices waste!
 Like sturgeon, or like brawn, shall I
 Bound in a precious pickle lie,
 Which I can never taste?

Let me embalm this flesh of mine
 With turtle fat and Bourdeaux wine,
 And spoil th' Ægyptian trade!
 Than Humphry's duke more happy I—
 Embalm'd ALIVE, old QUIN shall die
 A mummy ready-made.

THE

THE BRITISH EPICURE.

IMITATED FROM HORACE.

Persicos odi, &c.

I Hate French cooks, but love their wine;
On fricassée I scorn to dine,
And bad's the best ragout;
Let me of claret have my fill!
Let me have turtle at my will,
In one large mighty stew!

A napkin let my temples bind,
In night-gown free and unconfin'd,
And undisturb'd by women!
All boons in one I ask of fate,
Behind the 'Change to eat my weight!
And drink enough to swim in!

TO MR. QUIN,

*Upon his sending for his SPECTACLES, which he had
left behind at Mr. GARRICK's.*

He that is robb'd, not *wanting* what is stolen.
Let him not *know*'t, and he's not robb'd at all. OTHELLO.

FROM Shakespeare's law there's no appeal,
To shew what *is*, what *not* to steal.
To keep the Spectacles you left,
As you must *want* them, would be *theft*:
Your sight, alas, the worse for wear,
Your *Spectacles* you cannot spare;
But when, my friend, you leave behind
Strong tokens of a vigorous mind;

L

That

110 THE LIFE OF

That coin, which never false or light,
That sterling *wit* you pay at sight;
That *humour* trolling from your tongue,
So bold, emphatical, and strong;
That various whim, that social glee,
The quick enlivening repartee,
JACK FALSTAFF's rich variety!

}

Such, when you leave, to you *unknown*,
Without a theft, I'll make my own.
You can't be *robb'd* yourself must grant,
Of what you neither *miss*, nor *want*.

S T A N Z A S,

*Occasioned by the report of Mr. GARRICK's quitting
the stage, and by seeing his Epigram on QUIN.*

LONG had the town her Garrick's absence
mourn'd,

And woo'd fair Health with many an anxious
prayer,

'Till to his breast the blooming nymph return'd,
Borne on the bright wings of Hesperian air.

But, ah! severe the cautious law she gave!

What long reluctant Britain must deplore!

When, her lov'd actor's favourite life to save,

She bade him tread the wasting stage no more.

Grave look'd the God of Laughter whilst she spoke;

Of Lear's dim grave wild Pity sought the gloom;

Her mimic glass the Muse of humour broke,

And Shakespeare's genius languish'd o'er his tomb.

Phœbus was mov'd, when Shakespeare's genius sigh'd,

And nought, he cry'd, the God of Wit can give;

No grateful meed thy Garrick is denied;

Then spare the actor—and the bard shall live.

MR. JAMES QUIN. -III-

But now, reader, you must prepare yourself to take a long farewell of your facetious acquaintance. During the stay he made at Hampton, he had an eruption on his hand, which the faculty were of opinion would turn to a mortification; and this intimation greatly damped his spirits, as the thought of losing a limb appeared to him more terrible than death itself; he therefore resolved, let what might be the consequence, not to suffer an amputation. Whether this dreadful perspective so violently affected his spirits as to throw him into a hyponchondria, or whether the natural bad habit of his body brought on a fever, this much is certain, that one of the malignant kind succeeded; and when he was out of all danger with respect to his hand, he was carried off by this fatal disorder.

During his illness he had taken such large quantities of bark, as to occasion an incessant drought, which nothing could assuage; and being willing to live as long as he could without pain, he discontinued taking any medicines for upwards of a week before his death, and during this period he was in very good spirits. The day before he died he drank a bottle of claret, and being sensible of his approaching end, he said, "He could with

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“ that the last tragic scene were over,
“ though he was in hopes he should be
“ able to go through it with becoming
“ dignity.” He was not mistaken, and
departed this life on Tuesday the 21st of
January 1766, about four o’clock in the
morning, in the seventy-third year of his
age. The following is an authentic Copy
of his last Will and Testament.

MR. JAMES QUIN'S

L A S T

WILL and TESTAMENT.

I JAMES QUIN, now residing in Bath, in the County of Somerset, Gent. being in good health and of sound and perfect mind and memory, do make and ordain this my last Will and Testament, in manner and form following:

That is to say, after my funeral expences and debts paid, I give and bequeath unto Mr. Thomas Nobbes, Oilman, in the Strand, London, Five hundred pounds.

Item, I give and bequeath unto Mr. Charles Lowth, at the King's-Head, in Pater-noster-Row, London, Five hundred pounds.

Item, I give and bequeath unto Mr. Thomas James Quin, son of Dr. Henry Quin, Physician, in Dublin, One hundred pounds.

Item,

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Item, I give and bequeath unto Dr. Anthony Relhan, Physician, now living in Southampton-street, Covent-Garden, Two hundred pounds.

Item, I give and bequeath, as by a very foolish promise, to Daniel Leckie, my gold repeating watch, chain, and seals.

Item, I give and bequeath to Mrs. Penelope Lepage, and to Mrs. Sarah Lepage, single or married, both nieces to the late Mrs. Forrester, Fifty pounds each, or the whole Hundred pounds to the survivor.

Item, Unto William Grinfill, one of the Arts Masters of Bridewell Hospital, in London, Five hundred pounds.

Item, I give and bequeath to Mr. Daniel Rich, of Sunning, near Reading, in the County of Berks, One hundred pounds.

Item, I give and bequeath unto Mr. Thomas Gainsborough, Limner, now living at Bath, Fifty pounds.

Item, I give and bequeath unto the Wife of Walter Nugent, a first Lieutenant in the Marines, Fifty pounds.

Item, I give and bequeath unto Mr. Jeremiah Pierce, Surgeon, in Bath, my gold-headed crutch-cane.

Item, I give and bequeath unto the Honourable Mr. John Needham, of
Ivor,

Ivor, near Uxbridge, One hundred pounds.

Item, I give and bequeath unto Capt. Robert Hughes, brother to the Commissioner at Portsmouth, Fifty pounds.

Item, I give and bequeath unto Mrs. Mary Simpson, landlady of the Center House in Pierpoint-street, in Bath, One hundred pounds; to be paid by my executors into her own hands, independent of all her creditors whatsoever.

Item, I give and bequeath unto Mr. Edward Parker, Wine-Merchant, in Bath, Twenty guineas.

IT is also my Will, that all the above Legacies be paid and discharged within three months after my decease.

IT is also my Will to be privately interred.

ALL the rest and residue of my Estate, both real and personal, of what nature or kind soever, I give unto the abovesaid Mr. Thomas Nobbes, and Mr. Charles Lowth, to enjoy to their use and behoof, to share alike half and half. AND I do hereby constitute and appoint the abovesaid Thomas Nobbes, Charles Lowth, and Edward Parker, to be the executors of and to this my last Will and Testament, hereby revoking and declaring void all former Wills by me made.

IN

116 MR. QUIN'S WILL.

IN WITNESS whereof, I the said James Quin have to this my last Will and Testament, contained in one sheet of paper, and written with my own hand, set my hand and seal this tenth day of July, in the Year of our Lord, One thousand seven hundred and sixty-five.

JAMES QUIN (L.S.)

Signed, sealed, published and declared, as and for the last Will and Testament of James Quin, in the presence of us who have hereunto subscribed our names in presence of each other, and in the presence, and at the request of, the said James Quin,

HANBURY PETTINGAL,
JOSEPH PHILLOTT.



F I N I S.

